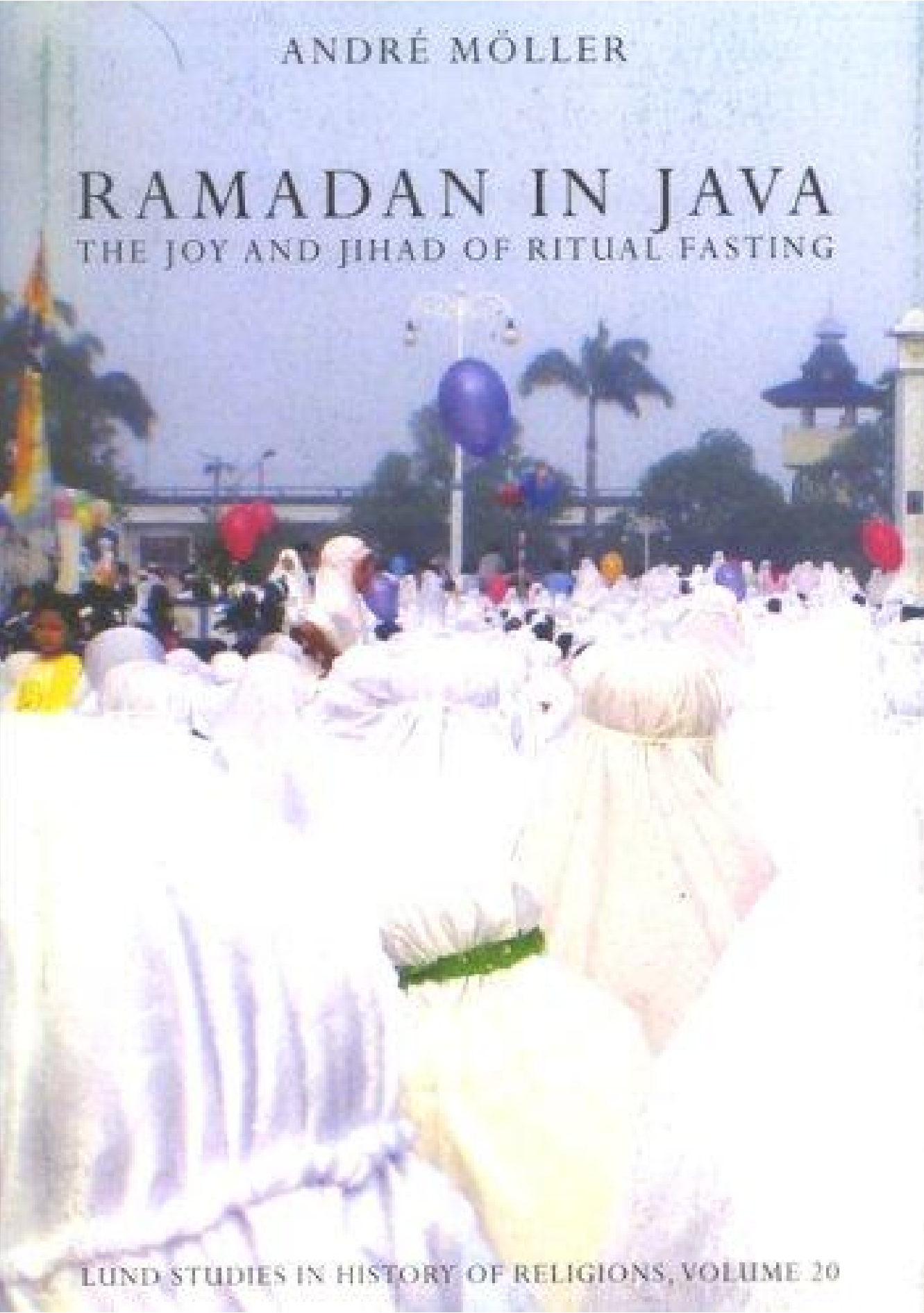
ANDRÉ MÖLLER

RAMADAN IN JAVA

THE JOY AND JIHAD OF RITUAL FASTING



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André Möller

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LUND STUDIES
IN HISTORY OF RELIGIONS

General Editor
Tord Olsson

VOLUME 20

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Den mätta dagen, den är aldrig störst.
Den bästa dagen är en dag av törst.

Nog finns det mål och mening i vår färd -
men det är vägen, som är mödan värd.

Det bästa målet är en nattlång rast,
där elden tänds och brödet bryts i hast.

På ställen, där man sover blott en gång,
blir sömnen trygg och drömmen full av sång.

Bryt upp, bryt upp! Den nya dagen gryr.
Oändligt är vårt stora äventyr.

~ Karin Boye, "I rörelse", from "Härdarna" ~

The satiated day is never the greatest.
The best day is a day of thirst.

There is probably purpose and meaning in our journey
but it is the pathway there, which is worth our while.

The greatest aim is a night long rest,
where the fire is lit and the bread broken in haste.

In the place, where you sleep but once,
sleep becomes safe and the dream full of song.

Move on, move on! The new day is dawning.
Endless is our great adventure.

~ Translation by Jenny Nunn in "To a Friend" ~

See further [www.karinboye.se]

(Thanks to Tord Olsson for reciting this poem at an apt occasion.)

PREFACE

Fasting during the holy month of Ramadan is both a joy and a jihad for the Islamic community in Java, and it is arguably the most highly esteemed ritual in Muslim Indonesia (and beyond). To be given the opportunity to abstain from food, drink and sexual relations from the wee hours of the morning until sunset during an entire month in a tropical climate—only to fill the nights with additional and supererogatory Ramadanic rituals—is thus waited upon each year and seen as a true blessing. This is, according to the Javanese, what rightly can be denoted as the "greater jihad." It is thus a struggle or exertion (jihad) that is both harder and more important within Islam than the "lesser jihad," or physical warfare, and it is directed towards one's own self and worldly desires. The subtitle of this work seeks to mediate this Javanese attitude towards Ramadanic fasting.

It should be noted, however, that I do not mean that "joy" and "jihad" by necessity should be understood as contrasting with each other here. Indeed, "joy" may work synonymously with "jihad," and in not so few instances I believe it does in the case of Ramadan in Java. There is, so to say, an immanent joy in engaging in Ramadanic jihad.

The idea to write a book on Ramadan and Ramadanic rituals in Java was born at about the same time as my daughter, Naima, was. It thus came about in a moment of enjoyable chaos, and I have come to experience that it is not only Ramadanic fasting that contains both joy and jihad. Both raising children and writing academic treatises embrace these two elements. Almost exactly three years after both Naima and the idea to this project saw daylight for the first time, I note that they partly have developed along similar lines and made similar experiences. They have, for instance, both suffered from some teething troubles, and they have also both posed serious challenges for their originator (so to say). As I now write these final lines before my work

will go in print, I realize that they both also have a life of their own now, which I only partly can influence.

All parts of this book have been debated at the post-graduate seminar in history and anthropology of religions at Lund University. These get-togethers are supervised and headed by Professor Tord Olsson, without whom the life of the doctoral students in Lund would be immensely much harder. He has generously spent both time and energy on reading and commenting on various versions of this work, and for this I am very thankful. I am also indebted to other people at the department for history and anthropology of religions (some of whom now have left the department), and would like to thank Dr. Ylva Vramming, Professor Catharina Raudvere, Ann-Louise Svensson, Professor Jan Hjärpe, Dr. Torsten Jansson, Dr. Jonas Otterbeck, *Ibu* Ann Kull, *Mbak* Frida Mebius-Önnerfors, Rickard Lagervall, Kristina Myrvold, Ask Gasi, Dr. Anne-Christine Hornborg, Anna Törngren, Åse Piltz, Dr. Pierre Wiktorin, Ingvar Bolmsten, Marcus Lecaros (and the rest, who are left unmentioned here). A special thanks is due to Dr. Peter Bryder who early on during my studies in Lund not only suggested that I should read Mark Woodward's *Islam in Java*, but also let me have his copy of it. He has since that day cared for me well, and we have had many good times with both Muddy Waters and John Coltrane (amidst dreams about the perfect orchid and lush greenhouses) at the department.

At Lund University, I would also like to thank Professor Mason Hoadely and Dr. Anna-Greta Nilsson-Hoadley at the Center for for East- and Southeast Asian Studies. They both provided much needed enthusiasm while I was studying Indonesian in Lund, and *Pak* Mason also ensured that I was sent off to Indonesia for some time (thus escaping the gloominess of some Swedish autumns and winters).

In Indonesia, I would like to extend my appreciation to some people at *Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta* (UNY), especially *Pak* Afieq, *Pak* Sugirin, *Ibu* Rizka and *Pak* Musa Ahmad. They all facilitated my stay in Yogyakarta, and particularly *Ibu* Rizka was helpful in showing me the way through the thickets of the Indonesian bureaucracy. The patience of *Pak* Musa Ahmad while trying to learn me and my fellow students at UNY Arabic is also worth mention. Thanks to you all.

I must also direct my most sincere thanks to all those friends in Yogyakarta, Blora, and elsewhere in Indonesia who have provided me with insights into Javanese/Indonesian Islam. I am forever in debt to you, but I will not mention you by name here. I just hope you realize that this book not only is *about* you all, but also, in one sense, that it is made *by* you. If (or, rather, when) any of you or your fellow Javanese feel misrepresented by the present work, I can only *nyuwun pangapunten*, ask for your forgiveness, and assure you that I did my best.

I need also to extend my thanks to the helpful librarians at the Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde (KITLV) and the University Library in Leiden, and Astrid at the International Center in that

amazing town. My thanks also go to the staff at the Nordic Institute for Asian Studies (NIAS) in Copenhagen, who let me stay there for two weeks in 2003. For economic support, I would like to express my gratitude to Craafordska Stiftelsen, Erik & Göran Ennerfelts Fond, Stiftelsen Elisabeth Rausings Minnesfond för forskning, and Stiftelsen Fil dr Uno Otterstedts fond för främjande av vetenskaplig undervisning och forskning. Thank you all.

Without the support of family members, life would have been much harder. Thanks thus to my parents (Gunnel & Åke Möller) and to my two brothers, Peter Möller and Dr. Tomas Akenine-Möller, and their families. A special thanks is due to Tomas who (in one sense) paved the way for this project, and also has answered many questions about how to write readable English. (Despite this, I am of course solely responsible for all linguistic boo-boos here.) Thanks also of course to *Mama* and *Papa* in Indonesia (*pangestunipun*), and to all other family members there.

Finally, thanks to my two sunbeams: my wife, *diajeng* Firdani, and our daughter, Naima, who went on her first Ramadanic excursion to Java at the age of four—months. I love you both.

(For updates, additional information and more pictures, please refer to my personal website at HTTP://WWW.DALANG.SE.)

Landskrona
April 2005

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CHAPTER ONE

PRELIMINARIES

KNOCKING ON HEAVEN'S DOOR

Tradition has it that the last prophet[1] of Islam, Muhammad, once metaphorically encouraged one of his wives to keep knocking on heaven's door. When asked with what she should knock, he simply answered: "with hunger."[2] Some four hundred years later, the renowned Muslim scholar al-Ghazālī pondered upon the inner logic of two other prophetic traditions, and concluded—in a moment of mathematical logic—that fasting constitutes a quarter of the (correct) Islamic faith.[3] Yet some nine hundred years later, an elderly Javanese woman selling fried rice in Yogyakarta used to tell a foreigner in her land that he ought to fast each Monday and Thursday. "If for nothing else," she used to say, "so for the baby your wife is carrying."[4]

From these three tiny but important fragments of Islamic history, we learn that ritual fasting in the Islamic tradition has had, and still has, a very prominent position. Indeed, as far as Javanese and other Indonesian Muslims are concerned, fasting in Ramadan is what makes people Muslims. Conse-

[1] Throughout this work, the word 'prophet' will not be provided with a capital 'P', and neither will it be followed by the customary *ṣalla llāhu ʿalyhi wa salam* (SAW) or *peace be upon him* (PBUH). This is not to say that I do not respect or appreciate the position of Muhammad within the Muslim community; rather, I simply choose this approach as it would be neither aesthetically appealing nor practical to have it the more traditional way.

[2] Tradition cited by Suyuti 1996: 76.

[3] The two traditions say that "fasting is half of patience" (A. *aṣ-ṣawmu niṣfu ṣ-ṣabr*) and that "patience is half of faith" (A. *aṣ-ṣabru niṣfu l-īmān*). See the section on fasting in al-Ghazālī's *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūmu d-dīn*. For an english translation, see Faris 1992: 8, and for an Indonesian, see Al-Baqir 2002: 11f.

[4] It was the habit of the prophet to fast during Mondays and Thursdays outside of Ramadan, and it has consequently become a recommend (but voluntarily) act of devotion for Muslims. Cf. ḤA 13,2430 and ḤM 6,2605. (See also subsequent chapters.)

quently, mosques which at their best only host something which could be called a congregation once a week during non-Ramadanic months, are filled with devout Muslims during each night of Ramadan, and people literally squeeze in their prayer rugs in the mosques and prayer halls to follow the supererogatory nightly prayers. (Some do not jeopardize their place in the mosque and place their prayer rugs there already in the late afternoon. The similarity in this respect with Western sun worshippers who place their towels at the beach as soon as they wake up is amusing.) Late-comers will often have to settle for a place in the parking lot.

Koran recitation is never heard as often during the rest of the year as during Ramadan, and graveyards receive their largest crowds of visitors in connection with the fasting month. In addition, public spaces in Java undergo a temporary Islamization during the two months (half of *Syaban*, Ramadan, and half of *Syawal*) Ramadanic rituals are performed. Indonesian media too undergoes a temporary Islamization: bookstores display large amounts of Ramadanic handbooks, newspapers present a never ceasing number of Ramadanic articles, TV stations broadcast their special Ramadan-influenced soap operas, and more Islamic music than ever is heard on the radio and in shopping malls. Needless to mention, stores selling Islamic paraphernalia are crowded.

Ramadan is thus of extreme importance to Javanese Muslims, and studies from other Muslim societies seem to suggest that non-Indonesian Muslims too are inclined to underline the significance of Ramadanic fasting. Surprisingly enough then, very few scholars have paid Ramadan and its rituals any serious attention. In introductory books on Islam it is all but uncommon that the fast is dealt with in only a few lines, and when it comes to works focusing entirely on Ramadan, we can easily count them on our right hand's fingers. In an attempt to improve these sad statistics, this work is devoted to questions pertaining to how Javanese Muslims understand, perform, and enjoy the fasting month of Ramadan. (As we will see, Ramadanic fasting can indeed be *enjoyable*.)

In one sense, this work presents a 'double case study.' On the one hand, it is a study of Javanese Islam, with the month of Ramadan as its case study. On the other hand, it is also a study of Ramadan with the Javanese context as its case study. I hope thus to say something general both of Ramadan and (Javanese) Islam, although my primary focus is on Javanese Ramadan.

In this introductory chapter I will discuss and draw attention to some rather broad issues, with the expectation and hope that the rest of the work—and the context in which it has arisen—will become more intelligible (and interesting). I will thus briefly discuss non-Islamic fasting as a phenomenon in the history of religions, consider various Islamic rituals and calendars, and ponder upon some methodological and theoretical questions my material has posed. This chapter is then concluded with a disposition of the remaining parts of the work. We will begin here, however, with a short introduction to

the amazing island of Java, and especially the marginalizations she has experienced in Western scholarship.

JAVA AND ITS MARGINALIZATIONS

Being situated a few degrees just south of the equator between Sumatra in the west and Bali in the east, Java has a rather even climate throughout the year. Although two seasons are discernable—a rainy and a dry—those looking for meteorological extremes will be disappointed. As the rainy season commonly only provides short tropical rains, the weather can be said to be hot, humid (with an average humidity of 75%) and sunny all year round. Nevertheless, non-stop raining does occur for a couple of days every now and then, the result of which frequently is severe floods (caused to a large degree of unhealthy development politics, corruption, and weak environmental organizations, but that is another issue).

Geographically and politically, Java is divided into four major provinces: West, Central and East Java, and the relatively new province of Banten. West Java is the homeland of the Sundanese people, whereas the Javanese inhabit Central and East Java. In addition, Java also has two 'special regions,' namely that of the capital Jakarta and that of Yogyakarta—both of which host peoples from all over the archipelago. With an area not larger than some 132,000 square kilometers (corresponding to half the size of Great Britain), Java is only Indonesia's fifth largest island (after Papua, Kalimantan, Sumatra, and Sulawesi). With its 120 million inhabitants and several important industries, it is nevertheless Indonesia's (severely overpopulated) political and economical center.

The country's cultural center is often thought to be situated in the special region (I. *daerah istimewa*) of Yogyakarta. Here, the Javanese arts of *gamelan* (I., traditional music), *wayang* (I., puppet theatre) and *batik* are said to be at their finest, and the Javanese language at its most refined (rivaled at times by nearby Solo). Yogyakarta is also the home of one of Indonesia's most respected figures, namely Sri Sultan Hamengkubuwono X—the sultan of Yogyakarta. Parts of the sultan's palace (I. *kraton*) are open to the public, and traditional Javanese dances are performed every Sunday. Never-ending streams of indigenous tourists come to visit the *kraton* throughout the year, but large concentrations occur during the holidays (read: holy days). The sultanate holds several important ritual functions in the minds of the Javanese, and the sultan himself is often depicted as a man with numerous extraordinary qualities. I often heard people say, for example, that the sultan habitually performs the Friday prayer simultaneously in the town mosque in Yogyakarta and in the Great Mosque in Mecca (regardless of the time difference and physical distance between Indonesia and Saudi Arabia).

It is common for Java to be depicted only either from the perspective of the capital—with its cosmopolitanism, politicians, businessmen, corruption, violence, pollution, trends, fashion, luxury, poverty, heat and humidity—or from the perspective of the royal cities of Yogyakarta and Surakarta (Solo)—with its refined cultural expressions, mysticism surrounding the sultans and their palaces, and general laid-back atmosphere. This is unfortunate as there are several other places of interest in Java, and as there is much more to Yogyakarta and Solo than their sultans and sultanates.

Ideas like these were put forward more than two decades ago by Ron Hatley, who then suggested that "the picture of the culture of Java most often seen is that of the Javanese court, or of the [allegedly non-Islamic] Kejawen heartland." Hatley also stated in respect to the by then available characterizations of the island, that "Java is more varied, richer than any of them."[5] After having discussed various seldom-heard-of aspects of Javanese life, he could then conclude that "[t]hough from the centre it never seems so, most of Java is far from the *kraton*."[6] While working with this thesis, I have verified for myself Hately's argument over and over again, and come to appreciate that there are many 'Javas' in Java—most of them detached from the *kraton* in Yogyakarta and Solo.

As will be discussed further below, this work is mainly built upon prolonged stays in the cities/towns of Yogyakarta and Blora (central Java). 'My' Yogyakarta is not that of the *kraton*, however. Although I enjoyed its dance performances every once and a while and although I quite often visited the adjacent *pasar ngasem* (pet market), my life was not centered in the vicinity of the palace but rather in the northern parts of the city—at quiet some distance from the sultan. The quarter (I. *kampung*) I came to inhabit was by no means only inhabited by Yogyakartan Javanese people. Rather, people from all over the archipelago were represented here: Sumatrans, Balinese, Papuans, Timorese, etc. Many were students—Yogyakarta is often referred to as a 'student city', or *kota pelajar*—living only temporarily in Yogyakarta, but many were also permanent residents who had lived in Yogyakarta for decades and had no plans of moving back to their parental areas. Common to them all was that they did not regard themselves as Yogyakartans in the first place. But there were also those who were native to Yogyakarta in the vicinity, of course. It is my impression that the relationship between these 'natives' and the 'new' inhabitants was peaceful and free from any serious grudges. However, there was a small *kampung* in the area that was known to be almost homogenously Yogyakartan, and more 'conservative,' i.e., *kraton*-

[5] Hatley 1984: 1.
[6] Hatley 1984: 15.

oriented, in character. Non-Yogyakartans, including me, rarely made there way there.

Being from around Indonesia, people in the *kampung* tended to make their new identity not based on ethnicity (as is common in Indonesia) but rather on two other things: Islam (a vast majority were Muslims), and the love of their new home. (People who have lived for a while in Yogyakarta tend to develop a serious emotional attachment to the city.) People could thus gather at the mosque and just be fellow Muslims, talking about, amongst other things, their new great home. As a result of the ethnic mix, the national language *Bahasa Indonesia* was frequently employed in this area, and I never run into anyone who could not communicate in this language. Javanese was also made use of, naturally, but not to the same extent as in other Javanese towns. To sum up, I found a Java "away from the *kraton*"[7] in the city most intimately connected to the *kraton* institution in Indonesia.

In Blora, the situation is another. Being located some 200 kilometers to the north-east of Yogyakarta, Blora is an anonymous and more homogenously Javanese town. Few people who do not live in its vicinity have any idea of where it is located, or for what it is known. More common is it then that people have heard of the neighboring towns of Cepu (for its oil) or Rembang (for its—unattractive—beach). The fact that the very readable author Pramoedya Ananta Toer was born in Blora is rarely known.

The climate in Blora is hot and dry; it is both hotter and drier than Yogyakarta, and a scarcity of water is common. Almost fifty percent of the area of the district of Blora is covered with forest—mainly teak—,[8] and the problems of illegal logging and a corrupt police force are serious. Due to its rich forests, Blora was early incorporated into large Javanese kingdoms, and it was only in 1749 that Blora became an area of its own right (I. *kabuptaen*). Blora is known to have been the home of the Samin Revolt in the late nineteenth century. Lead by Samin Surosentiko (1859-1914), the Samin Revolt was initially an anti-colonial movement, but later developed into a semi-religious organization with Samin himself as the *ratu adil*, or just king. On the website of the local government in Blora, one can read that Samin was "a local hero whose deeds should be paid attention,"[9] but to be called 'a Samin' in Blora today is rather depreciatory, as the movement in contemporary Blora often is linked with ideas of coarse farmers and a persistent resistance to development and change.

As will be discussed shortly in chapter two, Java is often thought to have been Islamized by nine saints (J. *wali sanga*), all of which are associated with their specific towns on the northern coast of Java. As a result, the northern coast (I. *pesisir*) is known to be more thoroughly Islamized than other parts of Java (primarily the southern central part, to which Yogyakarta

[7] Hatley *et al.* 1984.
[8] According to official statistics, Blora produced around 100,300 cubic metres of teak in 2001.
[9] [http://www.pemkabblora.go.id/sejarah_samin3.htm] [accesed 2004-01-23]

belongs). Blora, being situated some 30 kilometers from nearest coastal town (Rembang) and in-between the two *wali* towns of Kudus and Tuban, has no affiliation with any *wali* and is, as always, rather anonymous and discreet. Blora, then, is definitely another Java away from the *kraton*.

A few words on the relationship between peoples in the various areas of Java may be fitting here. Curiously, all Javanese seem to agree (1) that Yogyakarta and Solo are the two 'most Javanese' and thus most refined of all towns in Java; (2) that East Java is inhabited by very coarse people; and (3) that the inhabitants of the northern coast are more 'Islamized' or 'Muslim' than other peoples of Java. These statements are virtually truisms in Java. The East Javanese may thus depict themselves as coarse (J. *kasar*) in relation to the central Javanese, although they may admire their own straightforwardness. People living in south Java may similarly depict themselves as 'less Islamic' than their northern fellows, although they may be fond of the way they have kept their traditional (pre-Islamic) ways. And, finally, the peoples of the royal cities of Yogyakarta and Solo may praise their own refined (J. *alus*) ways, though being aware that they should be more devout Muslims and occasionally more straightforward. Although there is some truth to these statements, they are not as valid as most Javanese (and hence many non-Javanese and even non-Indonesians) think they are. Personally, I have met both the coarsest and the most Muslim devout characters in Yogyakarta, much corruption and hypocrisy in the *wali* town of Kudus, and just as much refinement in Surabaya, East Java. Such overly simplistic characterizations must then be taken for what they are.

MULTIPLE ACADEMIC NEGLECT

As will be mentioned in the section on previous research in chapter two, William R. Roff,[10] Anthony H. Johns,[11] Anthony Reid,[12] Robert W. Hefner,[13] and others have observed that Islam in Southeast Asia for long was thoroughly neglected by Western scholars. On the one hand, scholars of Islam have not been very interested in studying the 'peripheral' Islamic era of Southeast Asia, whereas, on the other hand, scholars associated with 'Asian Studies' have been of the opinion that Islam was something of an "intrusive cultural force" in the Southeast Asian context, and that the "real Southeast Asia lay deeper and was somehow less Islamic."[14] Hefner thus argued that the study of Islam in Southeast Asia has been the subject of a "dual marginalization."[15] Taking into consideration that Indonesia is the world's most

[10] Roff 1985a.
[11] Johns 1993.
[12] Reid 1993.
[13] Hefner 1997a.
[14] Hefner 1997a: 11.
[15] Hefner 1997a: 8ff.

populous Muslim country, and that Islam plays a very important and prominent role in the lives of ordinary Indonesians, this is surely unfortunate.

To the dual marginalization proposed by Hefner, we may add that Islam in Southeast Asia generally (and in Java specifically) often has been neglected by anthropologists. This is not peculiar to Southeast Asia or Indonesia, however; whenever social or cultural anthropologists study Islamic societies, they tend to look for what is *not* Islam (or, rather, for what they *believe* is not Islam). We may thus learn about allegedly heterodox beliefs and practices in these societies, but we learn nothing at all about how Islamic ordinary life is conducted. We read nothing about how the Islamic prayers or the fast of Ramadan are carried out, but we receive lengthy descriptions of rituals that are supposed to stand outside—and ideally in contradiction to—'orthodox' Islam. The habit of contrasting allegedly orthodox and allegedly heterodox beliefs and practices with each other stems from a one-sided and legalistic understanding of what Islam 'is'. In this respect, anthropologists make the same mistakes as scholars of Islam often do, i.e., to focus on the 'grand tradition' of Islam,[16] more of which will be said below.

In the context of the present work, we may notice yet one more marginalization that has hampered the understanding of Islam (in Southeast Asia), and this is the marginalization of the study of Islamic (ordinary) rituals. In the words of John R. Bowen, "familiarity with Islamic ritual has been unusually underdeveloped within the anthropology community."[17] Furthermore, scholars of Islam have also rarely engaged themselves in studies of Islamic ritual; their focus has instead been on the classical texts—and 'civilizations'—of Islam. This problem is not limited to Islam, however. On a more general level, Tord Olsson has drawn attention to the fact that the number of academic works that focuses on rituals still is relatively low (though rising) if compared to works focusing on beliefs, dogmas, myths, and other religious literature. This, he argues, is linked to the assumption among anthropologists, historians of religion, and theologians that religion primarily is about faith, and only secondarily about practice.[18] We will have reasons to return to the relation between faith and practice in the Javanese context several times in this work; suffice it here to mention that Javanese Muslims identify themselves and others on the basis of their practices, and not their beliefs. (After all, who can be sure of what another person or even oneself *believe in*?). A Muslim in Java is thus someone who performs the daily prayers or observes the fast of Ramadan, according to local categories. What is done is thus far more important than what is believed. Indeed, it is a widespread belief in Java that the first thing Muslims will be questioned on the Last Day is how diligent they have been in performing the daily prayers (and not what they have believed in).

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[16] See Bowen 1989: 600.
[17] Bowen 2000: 23.
[18] Olsson 2000.

Finally, the idea of Islam as a *religion* in a wider sense and not only as a political potential has been, and still is, rather marginalized in academic works on Islam. This state of affairs has only grown truer after the terror attacks in 2001, and the subsequent wars they came to legitimate. Naturally, we need studies of Islam in its capacity as a political force, and of Muslim politicians, dictators, and terrorists. Studies like these should not, however, largely outnumber studies of the lives and experiences of ordinary Muslims around the world. In a time when a more nuanced picture of Islam is desperately needed, one may only hope that grant-givers also realize this, and not only support studies of Islam in its political capacity, or dressed in its most disgusting outfit.

Studying Islam as a religion, we can allow ourselves to juxtapose and compare certain Islamic phenomena with similar or resembling phenomena from other religious traditions. Seeing thus that numerous cultures know of similar practices and motives, the common fear (founded on a lack of knowledge) people have for foreign traditions might perhaps be reduced (or, ideally, extinguished). The phenomenon of fasting may be a good place to start this endeavor.

FASTING IN THE HISTORY OF RELIGIONS

Ritual fasting, as a phenomenon in the history of religions, is not peculiar to Islam. Rather, ideas and practices involving the abstention from food and/or drink can be found in virtually all religions and cultures of the world. It is thus likely that our understanding of the Ramadanic fast will have something to gain from a discussion of non-Islamic fasting—however abridged it is here. Questions concerning the 'origin' of fasting on a general level, and possible 'influences' on Islamic fasting will deliberately be excluded from the sketch below, as they fall without the realm of my interest.

PRE-ISLAMIC FASTING (IN ARABIA)

Not much can be said about pre-Islamic fasting—or the religion of the ancient Arabs more generally—due to the scarcity of historical sources.[19] The Koran and certain Arabic works from the eighth century may give us some clues to an understanding of the practice of fasting in pre-Islamic Arabia, but it seems unlikely that we will ever gain a clear picture of this phenomenon.

Nevertheless, "[t]he whole rhythm of life of the pre-Islamic Arabs was regulated by the institution of holy months," writes S.D. Goitein,[20] and as-

[19] Wagtendonk 1968: 29, Goitein 1966: 92.
[20] Goitein 1966: 92f.

serts that a fast was held in the holy month of the spring, Rajab.[21] Allegedly, some Arabs continued this practice during the early years of the Islamic era, and were consequently intimidated by the second caliph ᶜUmar, since "Rajab should not be like Ramadan."[22]

We also know that the Arabs during the era later referred to as 'the era of ignorance' (A. *jāhiliyyah*) fasted or observed some form of abstention in connection with vows, pilgrimage, blood-revenge, war, and distress.[23] In seeking blood-revenge, for example, the pre-Islamic Arabs used to abstain from (by means of a vow) wine and women until the case was settled. One might also vow not to eat or drink in pre-Islamic Arabia until one's wishes were fulfilled. Tradition thus has it that one woman refused to eat, drink and take shelter from the sun until her son left Islam, to which he recently had turned.[24]

In the Koran we meet a few verses that depict fasting as a substitute or redemption for the failure of other (ritual) obligations.[25] These verses seem to be more relevant to the pre-Islamic era than to the Islamic.

Finally, we should mention that, according to tradition, Muhammad received his call to prophethood during a spiritual retreat (A. *taḥannuth*) to Mount Ḥirāᵓ. It seems probable that this withdrawal involved some kind of fasting. We may thus ascertain that the pre-Islamic Arabs knew of various occasions and reasons for conducting a fast or some kind of abstention. A month long fast during Ramadan was, however, not known to them.

FASTING IN INDIAN RELIGIONS

Religions and cultures having their origin in the Indian sub-continent are often popularly associated with ascetism and abstinence of various kinds. Buddhism, however, "denounces self-mortification which includes fasting as one of its aspects."[26] The Buddha, it is said, observed different forms of fasting during his initial spiritual search, but with little success. Nevertheless, he came to establish the principle of moderation in food (*bhojane mattaññutā*), something which especially monks were to abide by. Immoderate eating "leads to boredom, sloth and torpor and also invite [*sic*] the censure of the wise,"[27] and is therefore preferably avoided. What this *bhojane mattaññutā*

[21] During this time, the calendar used in Arabia was not yet purely lunar, and months thus fell during the same season each year, due to intercalation (see also below). Rajab eventually became the seventh month of the Islamic calendar.
[22] Tradition quoted by Goitein 1966: 93.
[23] See Wagtendonk 1968: 35-40.
[24] Wagtendonk 1968: 39.
[25] QS 2:196, 4:92, 5:89, 5:95, 58:4. See also chapter three below, Wagtendonk 1968: 132-139, and Goitein 1966: 94.
[26] Nanayakkara 1990: 220.
[27] *Visuddhimagga* quoted by Nanayakkara 1990: 221.

actually means in practice is a debated issue, but there seems to be a wide agreement that it should refer to the limitation of one ingested meal per day, and that this meal should be taken some time prior to noon. If rigorously observed, this could of course be interpreted as a kind of fasting, but Buddhists should then probably be inclined not to agree. During the five days immediately before the day of the Buddha's death, Buddhists are also reported as observing a fast consisting of abstention from meat.[28]

Hinduism and Jainism, on the other hand, know of several occasions during which fasting is observed. Both Hindu and Jain ascetics may thus fast during pilgrimage and certain festivals, for example. In addition, Jain girls may also fast with the belief that it will provide them with good husbands. There is also a belief in Jain circles that fasting can reduce the accumulation of *karman* and thus constitute a means of liberation from it.[29]

JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN FASTING

The only day for fasting in the Jewish tradition with support from the Mosaic Law is that of *Yom Kippur*, or the Day of Atonement. After the Babylonian exile, however, further days for public fasting were institutionalized in order to 'commemorate' tragic events in Jewish history.[30] In addition to these, Jews may also hold private and individual fasts; the bride and groom may thus fast on their wedding day, and pious Jews may fast every Monday and Thursday (*sheni va-ḥamishi*).[31]

Christians are of the opinion that their prophet did not lay down any rules for fasting, but rather left that matter to the Church.[32] This can perhaps then explain and legitimize the fact that Christian fasting has changed considerably over time, and that Christians in different geographical locations have observed different kinds of fasts during the same era. Maclean provides a rather comprehensive—albeit biased—historical presentation of all this in an article to which interested readers are referred.[33] For our purposes here, it may suffice to mention that fasting among contemporary Protestant Christians is a matter largely left to the individual. Hence, Protestants observing the fast during the forty days of Lent, for example, are probably not in majority in their community. The practice of fasting during Wednesdays and Fridays (which contrasts with the Jewish and Muslim fasts during Mondays and Thursdays) is probably also only observed in smaller circles among contemporary Protestants. Among Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox Christians

[28] Wagtendonk 1968: 19.
[29] Rader 1987: 289.
[30] *The Oxford Dictionary of the Jewish Religion* 1997: 251, Rader 1987: 287.
[31] *The Oxford Dictionary of the Jewish Religion* 1997: 251. Note that Muslims also may hold supererogatory fasts during Mondays and Thursdays.
[32] Cf. Kennedy 1967: 850, Maclean 1937: 765.
[33] Maclean 1937.

too has the practice of fasting lessened in importance. Today, "rigid fasting practices has been abolished," although some Catholics "still practice partial fasting and abstinence from meat on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday."[34]

CATEGORIZATIONS AND ADDITIONAL EXAMPLES

Finding the phenomenon of fasting in cultures around the world throughout history, some scholars have been tempted to mold these religious expressions into apt categories. In discussing the motivations to fasting, Rader has thus discerned three broad categories of fasting:

> (1) preliminary to or preparatory for an important event or time in an individual's or people's life; (2) as an act of penitence or purification; or (3) as an act of supplication.[35]

To the first category she refers, amongst others, the Greco-Roman mystery religions. In order to gain entrance to these, the initiate generally had to abstain from all or selected foods and drink, and fasting was also seen in this context as an aid to enlightenment. She also mentions that the ancient Chinese used to fast prior to the time of sacrifices, and that Hindu and Jain ascetics may fast in preparation for religious festivals. Rader oddly suggests that the Ramadanic fast should belong to this category. In what sense the Muslim fast is preliminary or preparatory, remains an unanswered question, however. Instead, when it comes to the Muslim tradition, fasting in the month just prior to Ramadan, that is Sha^{c}bān could be said to belong to this category. In Java, some Muslims fast prior to important events such as marriages and important journeys, and such practices could also fit into the proposed category for preliminary and preparatory fasting.

The second category includes the ancient Egyptian and Babylonian custom of fasting as a form of penance for wrongdoings and perceived sins. Rader also refers the Jewish fast during *Yom Kippur* to this category, and states that it was among the Christians during the Middle Ages that fasting as an act of penitence became a predominant feature of religious life. She also mentions the belief within Jainism that fasting has a purificatory effect, and finds a similar conception among Siouan-speaking Indians who used to fast and pray before hunting or engaging in warfare. She fails to mention, however, that the Muslim fast during Ramadan is believed to have both purificatory and penitential effects. The last category—that of fasting as supplication—includes, according to Rader, the Jewish fasts (depicted as one way of "bending the ear of Yahveh"),[36] certain Christian practices, as well as those of Muslims and Jains.

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[34] Rader 1987: 289.
[35] Rader 1987: 287.
[36] Rader 1987: 289.

Wagtendonk, whose main interest is Islamic fasting, makes a different, and rather more complex, categorization of fasting. He suggests that we make a distinction between individual and collective fasting, as well as between incidental and periodical fasting.[37] He thus discerns four main categories of fasting (individual incidental, individual periodic, collective incidental, and collective periodic fasting) and attributes to all these four categories a number of sub-categories. To the first of these belong, according to Wagtendonk, for example fasting in connection with the first menstruation (among Indians of British Columbia), prior to initiation into mystery cults (in the Hellenistic world), after the death of a relative (on the Andaman islands, in New Guinea, among the Yoruba in Africa, and elsewhere), and in connection with transgressions concerning sexual purity (in Mexico and Peru). When it comes to individual periodic fasting, Wagtendonk discerns three sub-categories: weekly, monthly, and yearly fasting. The first of these includes the fast of Jews and Muslims during Mondays and Thursdays, and that of Christians during Wednesdays and Fridays. He mentions that Muslims may fast during the 13th, 14th, and 15th of each (lunar) month, and that a sect in India is known to fast for the second half of each month (!). As for yearly fasting, Wagtendonk mentions the voluntary Muslim fasts.

Collective incidental fasting may be practiced in connection with impending natural disasters, warfare, or in case of all other sorts of calamities. So American Indian warriors fasted during war, and among the Maori those who stayed home had to fast during war too. As mentioned above, Jews came to fast during certain historical tragedies. When it comes to collective periodic fasting, Wagtendonk mentions fasting while sowing or plowing (in ancient China, among the Kai of central Borneo, in Palestine, in Morocco, etcetera), fasting at harvest time (among certain American Indians), and fasting at the siderial New Year (in Peru, ancient China, Israel, ancient Rome).

I find Wagtendonk's categorization of fasting rather peculiar. Is Ramadanic fasting, for example, individual or collective? I am inclined to say that it is both. In respect to Islamic fasting, then, a division between obligatory (A. *wājib*, *farḍ*) and supererogatory (A. *sunnah*) fasting would probably make more sense.

MacCulloh makes yet another division. Without discussing them any further here, we may note that he suggests the following categories of fasting: (1) fasting at certain stages of life, (2) fasting as an act of mourning, (3) fasting as a rite of preparation, (4) fasting at initiation, (5) fasting in magical ritual, (6) fasting as an act of penitence, and (7) fasting as an ascetic practice.[38]

[37] Wagtendonk 1968: 8f.
[38] MacCulloh 1937.

ARE SUCH CATEGORIES OF ANY USE?

It is of course tempting for historians of religion to make clear cut schemes and systems of fasting, since this phenomenon is so widely attested from cultures all over the world. And, indeed, it is interesting to see that similar motivations and practices can be found throughout history among geographically separated peoples. There is a value in itself to learn that the ancient Greeks used to fast before initiation into their different mystery cults, and that some peoples in Africa hold similar practices today. It is likewise valuable for us to understand that fasting has been practiced in connection with sowing in an area stretching from China to Morocco, and that both Jainism and Islam put some stress on the purificatory effects of fasting. And, furthermore, it is also of interest that both Jews and Shi^{c}ī Muslims fast to commemorate certain tragic historical events.

However, this—i.e. to let us see certain similarities among different peoples in different places and times—is as far as we may take it. We may thus not use these fasting categories in order to equate, for example, the practices of the ancient Babylonians with that of the Christians during the Middle Ages, or that of young Jain girls with that of the Chinese during the Han dynasty. We must always pay extensive attention to the context—historical, social, cultural, and/or economic—in which fasting occurs. Large-scale and broad phenomenological comparisons have a tendency to neglect the importance of this.

CALENDARS AND RITUALS

In order to contextualize the month of Ramadan and those rituals associated with it, we need to pay attention to the Islamic calendar and to Islamic rituals. In discussing these topics—about which much could and should have been written, but little has—I will try to say something general about Muslims' ideas of them. In doing this, I will generalize to a certain degree, although Javanese conditions will be paid special attention.

THE ISLAMIC RITUAL CALENDAR

Muhammad, son of ^{c}Abd Allāh, was first exposed to what was later identified as divine revelations when he was in his forties. It was during a spiritual retreat to Mt Ḥirā^{ɔ} in the vicinity of Mecca that he was overwhelmed by a voice telling him to "Read in the name of [his] Sustainer."[39] Tradition has it that this perplexed him greatly, and all the more so as he was illiterate; what

[39] This initial revelation is preserved in QS 96:1-5.

could he ever 'read'? The imperative *iqra* was soon, however, understood as meaning 'recite' rather than 'read' in the regular sense, and hence the mediation of the 'Recitation,' or the Koran (A. *al-qurʾān*), had been begun. Although more than six thousand verses were to be mediated from God via the archangel Gabriel (A. *Jibrīl*) to Muhammad during the remaining twenty two years of his life, illiteracy was still one of his qualities as he passed away. Until this day, pious Muslims around the world still refer to their prophet as *an-nabīu l-ummī*, the illiterate prophet, so as to emphasize this state of affairs.

The initial message of Muhammad, or rather, of God, was well received by a handful of the prophet's family members—including his wife Khadidja who might have been the first Muslim ever—and some others. When Muhammad three years after his initial revelation began to preach publicly, he was met with much suspicion, however. The vast majority of the Meccans—including the ruling elite—was keenly disdainful towards this 'new' message, and had a hard time finding enough reasons to leave their old ways behind. In 622 the situation had grown untenable, and Muhammad had to leave Mecca. The majority of his followers had already set out for Yathrīb—later known as Medina—and the prophet reached the oasis on September 24 the same year. The journey was initiated on July 16 and this date constitutes the beginning of the Islamic calendar. The move from Mecca to Medina is known in Arabic as *al-hijrah*; various non-Islamic languages know of it as the hegira, and the belonging designation *anno hegirae* (A.H.) is at times used to denote the Islamic era.

The *hijrah* represented a breaking of relationships with the Meccans—and not a 'flight' as Montgomery Watt has pointed out[40]—and more breaks were to come. One of those of direct interest for us is the new calendar that was introduced. Pre-Islamic Arabian cultures knew of several local calendars, but our knowledge of their use and characteristics is severely limited.[41] With Muhammad and the coming of Islam, a purely lunar calendar was put into practice. Prior to this, lunar calendars had been adjusted each second or third year with an intercalated thirteenth month—which made them luni-solar rather than lunar only calendars. Now the absolute lunar character of the months was retained. Partly, this was probably meant as a break with the earlier Semitic fertility cults that were common in the area, and partly also, perhaps, in order to let the early Muslims experience the grandeur and majesty of God, who is bound by neither time nor place. In practice, this means that the Islamic months 'move backwards' approximately eleven days each year in relation to the solar year, as the lunar year consists of an average of 354 days.

The length of the lunar months can be calculated, but most Muslims prefer to have the new crescent moon physically spotted before they 'enter'

[40] Watt 1986: 140.
[41] de Blois 2000: 259f.

the new month. (More on the Javanese attitudes towards these problems will be said in chapter four and five below.) The months of the lunar year are named as follows in Arabic, Indonesian and Javanese respectively:

1.	Muḥarram	*Muharram*	*Sura*
2.	Ṣafar	*Safar*	*Sapar*
3.	Rabīᶜu l-awwal	*Rabiulawal*	*Mulud*
4.	Rabīᶜu l-akhir	*Rabiulakhir*	*Bakda Mulud*
5.	Jumādā l-ūlā	*Jumadilawal*	*Jumadil Awal*
6.	Jumādā l-ākhirah	*Jumadilakhir*	*Jumadil Akhir*
7.	Rajab	*Rajab*	*Rejeb*
8.	Shaᶜbān	*Syaban*	*Ruwah*
9.	Ramaḍān	*Ramadhan*	*Pasa*
10.	Shawwal	*Syawal*	*Sawal*
11.	Dhū l-qaᶜdah	*Zulkaedah*	*Sela*
12.	Dhū l-ḥijjah	*Zulhijjah*	*Besar*

This is a ritual calendar only in many present-day Muslim countries, where the Julian calendar is used for more profane day-to-day activities. Nevertheless, this ritual calendar is often present in Muslim countries, as many of the months hold some special meaning for Muslims. In Muḥarram, for example, Muslims may keep a voluntary fast during the day of *ᶜāshūrāᵓ* (fasting during this day was regarded obligatory before the whole month of Ramadan was instituted as an obligatory time for fasting in 2 A.H.), and especially Shīᶜi (but also some Sunnī) Muslims remember the martyrdom of the prophet's grandson Ḥusayn during this same day. In Rabīᶜu l-awwal the birthday of Muhammad is celebrated or commemorated, and in Rajab, the prophet's heavenly journey, the *miᶜrāj*, is pondered upon. In Shaᶜbān, the preparations for the coming fast begins, whereas Ramadan—pretty much as this entire work—is devoted to fasting and additional rituals. Shawwal hosts the feast concluding the fast, and during the year's last month, Dhū l-ḥijjah, the annual pilgrimage to Mecca and the Feast of Sacrifice occur. There are thus plenty of reasons for contemporary Muslims to keep an eye on their ritual calendar in addition to their Julian dittos.

Though more or less local celebrations of various events characterize the ritual year within Islam, orthodox *ᶜulamāᵓ*, or religious scholars, are inclined to state that Islam knows of only two holidays, or, rather, holy days. Those are that concluding the Ramadanic fast, known as *ᶜīdu l-fiṭr* (A.), and that of *ᶜīdu l-aḍḥā* (A.), or the Feast of Sacrifice which marks the culmination of the annual pilgrimage. This latter feast, also known as *ᶜīdu l-kabīr* (A.), or the Great Feast, commemorates the willingness of Abraham (A. Ibrāhīm) to sacrifice his son due to the command of God.[42] Throughout the Muslim world, sheep and larger animals are ritually slaughtered during this day, so as to confirm the believers' commitment to serve only God. In Java, the surest

[42] See QS 37:102.

sign that this feast is approaching is the presence of a substantial number of farmers and sheep along the roads throughout towns and cities.

Certain days during the Islamic ritual year are thought of as more blessed and prosperous than others. In addition to those already mentioned above, we may add here that of *laylatu l-qadr*, which is probably the most venerated day—or, rather, night—in the Muslim world. This is one of the last odd nights of Ramadan, during which, according to tradition, the Koran was first bestowed upon Muhammad.[43] We will have plenty of reasons to return to this night in subsequent chapters.

Apart from these very special occasions occurring only once a year, Muslims generally also believe that certain days of each week or month are more blessed than others. Friday is generally thought to be the most prosperous day during the week. As it holds a congregational prayer (A. *aṣ-ṣalātu l-jumᶜah*) in the mosque, it is also the weekly holiday in some Muslim countries. Friday is also a good day for supererogatory devotions, as God answers all prayers during a certain—to mankind unknown—hour during this day.[44] In Indonesia, some offices and shops close earlier (before lunch) on Friday, but Sunday is still the general holiday during the week. (Quite surprisingly, very little critique is raised against this phenomenon.)

Those Muslims inclined to fast outside the month of Ramadan usually do so during Mondays and Thursdays. The prophet was born on a Monday, and Thursday owes its blessing to its proximity with Friday. Tuesdays, on the other hand, are considered not auspicious at all. Finally, the three days in the middle of the (lunar) month are also considered especially blessed, and many Muslims also fast during these days.

Indonesia has adopted the seven-day week from Islam with the names of the days almost intact. In addition to this, however, the Javanese also know of an older five-day week, and these two week systems have been mixed into a delicate complicated system by Javanese philosophers. Combined, these two systems give birth to a 35-day cycle (J. *selapan*), in which certain combinations are deemed more spiritually potent than others. One such combination is Jumat-Kliwon, which thus is the day in the 35-day cycle when Friday (in the Arabic week) coincides with Kliwon (in the Javanese week). Whenever this day occurred, some Muslims in my neighborhood had the habit of gathering in the mosque in order to collectively recite *sūrat yā sīn*.[45] Weddings are occasions in which dates are of special importance to the Javanese: the birth dates of the two spouses-to-be have to 'fit' (J. *cocog*) with each other as well as with the date for the wedding itself. This requires some calculation. Younger people show relatively little interest for such issues in contemporary Java, and it seems likely that the practice will become more infrequent in times to come. Many Muslim modernists in Indonesia dismiss

[43] See QS 97.
[44] Schimmel 1994: 74.
[45] QS 36.

the Javanese idea that certain days should be more prosperous than others as mere superstition. For them, any day is an advantageous day as long as one acts in accordance with the will of God.

The Islamic ritual lunar calendar has also been adopted almost unaltered to Indonesian and Javanese conditions (see further chapter five). The importance given to certain months differ, however, between Arab countries and Java. Marriages according to the Javanese worldview are, for example, thought to be advantageously conducted in the months of *Mulud* (J., A. *Rabīᶜu l-awwal*) and *Besar* (J., A. *Dhū l-hijjah*), and this seems to lack correspondence from other parts of the Muslim world.

The importance of the Islamic religious calendar in Java should not be underestimated. I frequently found that my student friends in Yogyakarta had no idea of what Julian month we were in, but that they nearly always could orient themselves according to the Islamic calendar. They thus knew, for example, that *Muharram* was just around the corner, or that *Rabiulawal* just had passed by. But whether it was April or August was of little or no concern for them. This is understandable as Indonesia only knows of two seasons: one rainy and one dry (and these are not necessarily very different from each other, as mentioned above). In northern European countries we are very aware of our Julian months, as we expect certain meteorological phenomena to occur in them. If we hear 'May' we immediately think of lovely pre-summer days, and if someone says 'November' our mood conversely turns grey. Lacking such conceptions, Indonesians divide their year ritually instead. Some, to be sure, prefer a yearly division based on the many different fruit seasons the country so proudly hosts. For them it is more natural that the mango season is followed by a season dominated by *durian*, for example, than that May follows April. Anyhow, to conclude, we may easily agree with Denny when he says that the "Islamic calendar and indeed the Islamic day are pregnant with ritual meaning."[46]

ISLAMIC RITUALS

The 'technical' Arabic term for worship, ritual, or pious practice is *ᶜibādah* (pl. *ᶜibādāt*), preserved in Indonesian as *ibadah*. In an Indonesian introductory textbook on Islam (used at *Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta* during my time there) the essence (I. *hakekat*) of *ibadah* is described as

> The submission of the soul that is caused by the love towards God, the worshipped, and the sensing of His Greatness. This [in turn] is caused by the conviction that behind this whole universe there is a Force whose essence cannot be grasped by reason.[47]

[46] Denny 1985: 72.

[47] Sudrajat 1995: 147. *Ketundukan jiwa yang timbul karena hati (jiwa) merasakan cinta akan Tuhan yang ma'bud (yang disembah) dan merasakan kebesaran-Nya, disebabkan adanya*

Closely connected to Islamic rituals is the notion of the right intention (A. *nīyah*, I. *niat*) that needs to precede any Muslim devotional act. Narrated ᶜUmar:

> I heard Allah's Apostle saying, "The reward of deeds depends upon the intentions and every person will get the reward according to what he has intended. [...]"[48]

Without such an articulated intention, the act will not, so say Muslims, be regarded as valid in the eyes of God. On the other end of the spectrum, a pious act intended but not performed is still believed to render divine rewards. Before commencing the short discussion of various Islamic rituals, we should also mention that the state sought after during any ritual is that of *khushūᶜ* (A., I. *khusyuk*), or complete devotion, and that all rituals ideally should be performed out of sincerity (I. *dengan ikhlas*).

Islam is often said to be built on—or consist of—five pillars (A. *arkānu l-islām*). Indeed, in the collections of traditions, one meets amongst other the following statement, narrated by ᶜUmar, which supports this view:

> Allah's Apostle said: Islam is based on (the following) five (principles):
> 1. To testify that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah and Muhammad is Allah's Apostle
> 2. To offer the (compulsory congregational) prayers dutifully and perfectly
> 3. To pay Zakat (i.e. obligatory charity)
> 4. To perform Hajj (i.e. pilgrimage to Mecca)
> 5. To observe the fast during the month of Ramadan.[49]

Against this characterization, however, one also finds other traditions:

> Narrated Abu Huraira:
> Allah's Apostle was asked, "What is the best deed?" He replied, "To believe in Allah and His Apostle (Muhammad). The questioner then asked, "What is the next (in goodness)? He replied, "To participate in Jihad (religious fighting) in Allah's Cause." The questioner again asked, "What is the next (in goodness)?" He replied, "To perform Hajj (Pilgrimage to Mecca)..."[50]

> [...] He [an unknown man who just has asked the prophet about the characteristics of 'faith'] (again) said: Messenger of Allah, (tell me) what does al-Islam signify. He (the Holy Prophet) replied: Al-Islam signifies that you worship Allah and do not associate anything with Him and you establish obligatory prayer and you pay the obligatory poor-rate (Zakat) and you observe the fast of Ramadan. [...][51]

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keyakinan bahwa bagi alam semesta ini ada kekuasaan yang akal tidak dapat mengetahui hakekatnya.

[48] ḤB 1,1,1.

[49] ḤB 1,2,7. Note that charity generally is mentioned as the third pillar, the fast as the fourth, and the pilgrimage as the fifth.

[50] ḤB 1,2,25.

[51] ḤM 1,4.

Despite such statements of the prophet which seem to suggest something other than the pillars mentioned initially in this section, Muslims throughout the world are in agreement that their religion indeed is based on these five pillars. Moreover, they regard them to be obligatory. We have no reasons for not taking that serious here.

The first pillar (A. *rukn*), which often is overlooked in works of *fiqh* or jurisprudence, is that of the testimony of faith (A. *shahādah*). All Muslims are compelled to state the formula of 'I bear witness that there is no god but God, and I bear witness that Muhammad is the prophet of God'[52] at least once in their lifetimes. In actual practice, many Muslims utter it several times a day. If they perform the five daily prayers, for example, they will have pronounced it at least nine times each day when they go to bed at night.

The performance of the daily prayers (A. *ṣalāh*) is the second pillar of Islam, and—together with Ramadanic fasting—probably the most powerful identity making Islamic ritual. Five times a day (according to set schedules), Muslims throughout the world turn towards the Black Stone in Mecca. In doing this they follow their prophet in that he is said to have encouraged his followers to perform the prayer as they saw him perform it (A. *ṣallū kamā raytumūnī uṣallī*).[53] In addition, the Koran frequently mentions the importance of the *ṣalāh*. For example:

> ...and be constant in prayer, and spend in charity, and bow down in prayer with all who thus bow down.[54]

> ...hence, pray unto thy Sustainer [alone], and sacrifice [unto Him alone].[55]

The Koran does not, however, specify the number of *ṣalāh* to be performed per day. Muslims all over the world agree that this number should be five, although tradition has it that God initially enjoined Muhammad and his early followers to perform no less than fifty prayers a day. As prayer then left no room for other activities, the prophet had to—due to the encouragement of Ibrāhīm—'bargain' with God during his heavenly journey. When the number finally was reduced to five, Muhammad did not ask for any further extenuations. So five it is.

A contemporary Indonesian prayer manual defines the ritual prayer as follows:

> *Shalat* [ritual prayer] is when we turn our hearts towards God in worship, in the form of a few sayings and doings, that is begun by the *takbir* [the uttering of *Allāhu*

[52] A. *ashhadu an lā ilāh ilā llāh, wa ashhadu anna muḥammada rasūlu llāh.*
[53] Tradition quoted by Labib n.d.: 22.
[54] QS 2:43.
[55] QS 108:2. Cf. QS 2:153, 30:31, 40:14, 51:56, 62:9, 70:22, 73:20.

> *akbar*] and closed by the *salam* [the uttering of the Islamic greeting], all in line with the by Islamic law defined requisites.[56]

Each prayer consists of a set number of prayer cycles (A. *rakᶜah*, pl. *rakaᶜāt*), which in turn consists of several obligatory components, including the recitation of *al-fātiḥah*,[57] bowings, and prostrations. Apart from the dawn prayer which consists of only two, and the dusk prayer which consists of three, the obligatory prayers consist of four such prayer cycles each.

The five daily prayers are of immense importance to Indonesian Muslims, as will be discussed shortly in chapter two. Apart from these obligatory prayers, however, many Muslims (in Indonesia and elsewhere) also perform supererogatory prayers. During Ramadan, they may prostrate themselves each night during the *tarāwīḥ* prayers in the mosque, for example. (To these prayers we will have plenty of reasons to return in subsequent chapters). Outside the month of fasting, Muslims are also faced with the possibility of performing numerous non-obligatory *ṣalāh*. Mention can here be made of the *taḥiyyatu l-masjid* (which is done when entering a mosque), the *tahajjud* (performed during night-time), the *istikhārah* (which is performed when asking for guidance to choose between two alternatives), the *taubah* (performed after committing a perceived sin), the *ᶜīd* (on the two holidays; further discussed in chapter five), and the *istisqā* (when asking for rain to fall). In addition, Muslims also pray congregationally when someone passes by, and (individually) before and after the obligatory prayers.

In the Koranic context, the prayers are closely connected to the third pillar, namely that of *zakāh* or alms-giving:

> ...and you shall be constant in prayer; and you shall spend in charity.[58]

Whereas the *ṣalāh* is directed towards God, the *zakāh* is directed towards one's fellow humans.[59] The term itself means 'purification' and Muslims hence believe that the paying of the *zakāh* has a purifying quality. The amount of this 'tax' that has to be paid is dependent on one's wealth, and it is only that quantity that exceeds a minimum amount (A. *niṣāb*) that is taxable. The *niṣāb* for gold, for example, is just below one hundred grams, and that of silver just below six hundred grams. When it comes to animals, the minimal amount is set to five camels, thirty cows, or forty sheep. The size of the *zakāh* is dependent on what is being taxed; for gold, silver, and cash the rate is 2.5%

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[56] Rifa'i 1976: 34. I. *Shalat ialah berhadap hati ke Allah sebagai ibadat, dalam bentuk beberapa perkataan dan perbuatan, yang dimulai dengan takbir dan diakhiri dengan salam serta menurut syarat-syarat yang telah ditentukan syara'.*

[57] QS 1.

[58] QS 2:83. Cf. QS 2:43, 4:77.

[59] It has been questioned whether *zakāh* should be regarded as a ritual or not. Here we accept the general Muslim idea that the payment of this 'tax' is part of the obligation that falls under the *ibādāt* complex.

of the amount exceeding the *niṣāb*, whereas it for animals and land is ten percent. The *zakāh* has to be paid every year.[60]

Those eligible of receiving these alms are set down in the Koran:

> The offerings given for the sake of God are [meant] only for the poor and the needy, and those who are in charge thereof, and those whose hearts are to be won over, and for the freeing of human beings from bondage, and [for] those who are overburdened with debts, and [for every struggle] in God's cause, and [for] the wayfarer: [this is] an ordinance from God – and God is all-knowing, wise.[61]

In certain Muslim countries, the payment of *zakāh* has been enforced by the state, but in Indonesia it remains a private and individual duty. Discussions are held, however, as to whether someone who can prove that she has paid this Islamic tax should receive abatement in regard to the general state tax. Finally, it is worth mentioning that most Indonesian Muslims who pay the *zakāh* do this during Ramadan, in connection with the payment of the (later discussed) *ṣadaqatu l-fiṭr*. The simple reason for this is that good deeds are thought to be rewarded according to a special and highly favorable Ramadanic scale during this month. It is often said, for example, that the divine rewards during Ramadan are up to seventy times larger than their equivalents in non-Ramadanic contexts. In such cases, it seems logical to pay the *zakāh* during the month of fasting. Nothing more will be said about Islam's fourth pillar (i.e., fasting during Ramadan) here; further discussions of it will show up later.

The fifth and last pillar of Islam is that of *ḥajj*. This is the annual pilgrimage to Mecca which is bestowed (once) upon every Muslim who has the physical and economical possibility to undertake such a journey. The obligation is laid down in the Koran:

> Hence, pilgrimage unto the Temple is a duty owed to God by all people who are able to undertake it.[62]

We need perhaps not discuss the composition of this complex ritual at any length here. Suffice it to mention that it preserves some pre-Islamic rituals, and that it is closely connected to the life and deeds of the prophet Ibrāhīm (Abraham).

In Indonesia, people who have made the pilgrimage to Mecca are referred to as *haji* (men) or *hajjah* (women), and warrant much respect and esteem by their surroundings. *Pak Haji* (literally 'Mr. Pilgrim') is hence not an uncommon designation of men who have made the journey. The Saudi Arabian government now employs a quote system for the number of pilgrims allowed from each country. Indonesia's quote of some two hundred thousand

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[60] See further Siddiqi 1987.
[61] QS 9:60.
[62] QS 3:97. The "temple" in Asad's rendering of this verse refers to the Arabic *al-bayt*, i.e., the "house [of God]" in Mecca.

pilgrims (0,1 percent of the population) is filled each year, despite the prolonged economic crisis.[63] This ensures that Indonesians are in majority among the pilgrims in Mecca (and that the Indonesian national airline survives).

Apart from these obligatory pillars, Muslims perform a series of other rituals too. I have already mentioned non-*zakāh* almsgiving (A. *ṣadaqah*), and other common rituals or acts of worship include marriage, circumcision (for men, or, rather, boys), *ᶜaqīqah* (A., the slaughtering of goats for newborn babies), *ziyārah* (A., non-*ḥajj* pilgrimage), Koran recitation, and *ᶜumrah* (A., the 'lesser pilgrimage' to Mecca). But even more day-to-day activities can be regarded as *ᶜibādah*. Thus, it is not rare to hear someone in Java say that he or she regards some ostensibly mundane activity as worship. As long as what one undertakes is in line with the wish and words of God, it is commonly argued, that undertaking can be said to be an act of *ᶜibādah*. If one can find some tradition that supports the idea that Muhammad used to engage in the same activity, one's case grows even stronger to refer to that act as worship. As a direct consequence of this way of reasoning, ironing one's underwear or cooking chicken may be said to be part of the *ᶜibādāt* complex.

HOW TO UNDERSTAND ISLAMIC RITUALS: FOUR 'BASICS'

Now, how can we understand and approach Islamic rituals? How can we get the rituals mentioned above to make sense to us? How can we describe them? Those few scholars who have paid Islamic rituals more than the regular sparse attention are in full agreement that these rituals have been unfairly neglected by scholars of Islam as well as by anthropologists.[64] I am not interested in discussing previous theories and approaches to Islamic rituals in any detail here, but what must be mentioned is that they all have treated Islamic rituals as somehow standing apart from the ideas, lives, experiences, and explanations of Muslims themselves. This, I believe, is a mistake, although similar ideas and approaches are widespread in religious studies on a more general level. It is my conviction that Islamic rituals have no 'life' apart from that given to them by practicing Muslims.

The seed to the answers to the questions posed above lies then, I argue, in the ways Muslims themselves comprehend the rituals they perform (or *not* perform). We cannot let ourselves imagine that we can get to understand Islamic rituals without trying to understand Muslim understandings of them first. As such, our ritual understanding will be partly dependent upon time, place and to whom we talk, but it is rather sure to presuppose a certain (and, in the case of the Islamic 'standard' rituals, quite large) measure of coherence

[63] In 2003, the price for a regular 'pilgrimage ticket' was around 3,000 US dollar—an immense amount of money in Indonesia.
[64] Cf. Bowen 1989, 2000, Denny 1985, Graham 1983, Roff 1985b, Østergaard 1994, 2002.

throughout both history and different geographic locations. Of course, any ritual will be dependent on personal interpretation—causing two Muslims in the same village during the same day, for example, to explain a certain ritual in contrasting ways[65]—but we may, I believe, discern the general grand idea behind a ritual by talking to its performers. Put differently, a Sufi inspired villager and a cosmopolitan Wahhābī may interpret the Ramadanic fast divergently, but they would nevertheless probably agree on its 'basics.'

Now, what are these 'basics' in the Muslim context? As far as I have been able to grasp the general Indonesian (contemporary) idea of Islamic rituals, we may talk of four such basics that together legitimate and motivate the performance of Islamic rituals. Firstly, Islamic rituals follow the example set by the prophet; secondly, Islamic rituals are believed to generate religious merit (I. *pahala*); thirdly, Islamic rituals may lessen the feelings of debt Muslims often have towards God; and, fourthly, Islamic rituals express certain Islamic ideas, primarily that of the unity and oneness of God (I. *tauhid*, A. *tawḥīd*). Let us discuss these proposed basics.

It may surprise some readers that Muslims do not continually ponder upon the meaning and symbolism of their rituals, but simply concentrate on performing them in a satisfyingly way. When asked why they scrupulously perform the five daily prayers, for example, Muslims may simply answer that they do so because God (via Muhammad and the Koran) has ordered it. Indeed, the prophet is quoted as having said that his followers should perform the prayers as they saw him perform them, and the Koran frequently encourages Muslims to perform the prayers, as mentioned above. Further, Muhammad is referred to as an *uswah ḥasanah* (A., excellent example) in the Koran,[66] and there is thus little reason for Muslims to question the practice of their prophet. Muhammad is, so to say, the religion's ritual master. It thus makes sense that Muslims are more inclined to be occuppied by questions pertaining to the (exact) way the prayers should be carried out, rather than by questions of a more philospihical nature.[67] This will become very clear in chapter four when we will discuss some contemporary Indonesian handbooks on the Ramadanic fast. To anticipate a bit, mention can be made of the Indonesian scholar Ash-Shiddieqy who consciously leaves questions concerning Ramadan's boons or essence unanswered, since such delicate matters are beyond, he argues, the scope of human reason.[68] A similar opinion was once expressed by the Muslim thinker al-Ghazzālī (d. 1111). He argued that the different parts of the annual *ḥajj* pilgrimage can be grasped by neither reason nor the senses since they only are intelligible as a set of practices performed

[65] See for example Bowen (2000) and Beatty (2000) for discussions of contrasting interpretations of the performance of the *sholat* in the Indonesian context.
[66] QS 33:21. Cf. QS 4:80, and the discussion on the position on *aḥādīth* in Islam in chapter three below.
[67] Bowen (2000: 27) has rightly argued that Muslims' deviations in Islamic ritual are "either accidental [...] or blasphemous."
[68] Ash-Shiddieqy 2000: 12. Cf. chapter four below.

with the intent to obey and worship God.[69] Before him, ᶜUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb is said to have uttered the following when he kissed the Black Stone in Mecca: "By God, I know that you are only a stone, and had I not seen the Apostle of God kiss you, I would not kiss you!"[70] By performing the prescribed rituals then, Muslims follow the example of their prophet. In doing this, they are sure they are on the straight way, which they ask for numerous times each day by way of the first chapter of the Koran, *sūratu l-fātiḥah*.

The second 'basic' proposed above is that of Islamic rituals as merit-generating. Muslims perform their rituals with the conviction that performing them will ease the proceedings during the Last Day. There is thus an eschatological orientation connected to Islamic rituals.[71] As already mentioned, Javanese Muslims have frequently told me that the first thing God asks every individual on the Day of Resurrection is how diligent they have been in performing the five daily prayers. Assiduousness in ritual performance may be rewarded with paradise, whereas a systematic neglect of Islamic ritual duties most likely will be reimbursed with the Fire. In the words of Amien Rais, "this world is the rice field of the afterworld."[72] As a man sows, so shall he reap. In Indonesia, religious merit is known by the term *pahala* (A. *ajr*), and some friends of mine in Yogyakarta used to keep a keen eye on how much such *pahala* they generated in various situations. The most valuable time for accumulating religious merit is during Ramadan, when, as alluded to above, good deeds are thought to be rewarded according to a special Ramadanic scale (we will return to this later). Taking into consideration that good deeds performed during Ramadan are believed to be divinely reimbursed up to seventy times more generously than during non-Ramadanic months, we should not be to surprised then that Ramadan recently was denoted as a "feast of religious merit" (I. *pesta pahala*).[73]

Islamic ritual as following the example set by the prophet Muhammad and as generating *pahala* are the two most common emic 'explanations' of the performance of these rituals in contemporary Java. Apart from these, the Javanese also frequently mention that the performance of the prescribed rituals may reduce the feelings of debt Muslims hold towards God (the third 'basic' proposed here). In a Koranic style, they say that humans were created only to serve (I. *mengabdi*) God,[74] and that they by being created stand in an eternal relation of debt towards Him. By leading a good life in general and being diligent in ritual performance in particular, they may repay some of this debt.

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[69] Quoted by Graham 1983: 56.
[70] Quoted by Graham 1983: 67.
[71] Note however that Muslims generally also hold that they will benefit from this religious merit already in this life.
[72] Rais 2001d: 77. I. *Kehidupan dunia adalah sawah ladang kehidupan akhirat.*
[73] Nasiruddin 2000: 36.
[74] Cf. QS 51:56.

Finally, some Javanese Muslims also express the idea that their rituals express some Islamic ideas and ideals, primarily that of *tauhid* (I.), or the oneness and unity of God. In this line of reasoning one could say that doctrine is expressed by way of rituals in the Islamic tradition. Denny has rightly observed that "*[t]awḥīd* is not merely a matter of theological propositions, but also a living realization: the 'making one' of God by total submission and service."[75]

To sum it all up in one sentence, I propose here that Islamic rituals are commemorative or confirmative in character; that they have an eschatological orientation; that they are thought to be able of reducing the human debt towards God; and that they express and thereby confirm Islamic doctrine. These are the 'basics' of Islamic rituals, with which most Muslims probably would agree. This does not mean that Islamic rituals not are the constant subject of discussions and disputes concerning ritual detail, ritual 'side effects,' and more philosophical questions. Neither does it deny the existence of Western scholars' theoretical arguments in which Islamic ritual and the Muslims who perform them are seen as separate and independent entities. It only questions its applicability and use in the present context.

We may note finally that rituals that hold all the four proposed 'basics' can be regarded by most Muslims as 'normative' (see also below) in one sense. A ritual that misses the first basic—that concerning the example set by Muhammad—but embraces the other three may be controversial. In the Indonesian case, we can say that modernists are likely to denounce such rituals as *syirk* (I., ungodly innovation), whereas traditionalist Muslims are prone to accept them as part of their religion. The Javanese tradition of holding *slametan* rituals (to be discussed) may be seen in the light of this line of reasoning. Finally, we should note that some Muslims may argue that a certain ritual expresses a certain Islamic doctrine, whereas others would deny this, or even attribute another Islamic doctrine to the relevant ritual.

LANGUAGES, METHODS AND MATERIAL

Let us now turn to questions pertaining to how I have communicated with the Javanese, and how I have approached them in my search for knowledge. A few words on my non-ethnographic material will also be put forward.

ARABIC, INDONESIAN, AND JAVANESE

Arabic is the language in which the Koran was revealed to Muhammad. Consequently, it is revered, at least in its Koranic form, throughout the Islamic

[75] Denny 1985: 64.

world as a 'sacred' language. Children whose mother tongue is a non-Arabic language learn at an early age to recite the Arabic Koran, and the 'purity' of the language is vigilantly guarded over. The Koran itself makes clear on several occasions that it constitutes an *Arabic*, and thus clear (A. *mubīn*), revelation:

> Behold, We have caused it to be a discourse in the Arabic tongue, so that you might encompass it with your reason.[76]

> ...a divine writ, the messages whereof have been clearly spelled out as a discourse in the Arabic tongue...[77]

The vast majority of the Indonesian Islamic community is able of reciting—fairly good, at least—the Koran in Arabic, and Indonesian citizens frequently achieve honorable positions in international Koran recitation competitions. Nevertheless, the general Indonesian Muslim is not so well versed in understanding the Arabic content of the Koran. In fact, it is rather safe to conclude that most reciting Indonesians have no clue of what they are reciting. Not being able of understanding something grammatically or linguistically does not, however, mean that one does not 'understand' it in some other way. It would be hard to arouse the needed enthusiasm for reciting a text if the latter did not 'speak' or 'have something to say' to the reciter in some way or another. This communication need not be linguistically exact, I argue.

My own knowledge of Arabic is likewise circumscribed. As the general Indonesian Muslim, I may recite the Koran tolerably, but I do not understand—linguistically, at least—most of what I am reciting. To my advantage is, however, that I am (often) able of figuring out from what three or four radicals a certain Arabic word is derived, and thus of using dictionaries for determining the grammatical meaning of it. I hence have a basic understanding of Arabic grammar (for which I am thankful to Ann-Sofie Roald, Lund/Malmö, and *Pak* Musa Ahmad at UNY).

The national and official language of Indonesia, *Bahasa Indonesia*, is the largest language in the Austronesian family with its more than two hundred million potential users.[78] Very few Indonesians have *Bahasa Indonesia* as their mother tongue, however, as most people are raised in a milieu that uses one of the several hundred local languages Indonesia exhibits. Officially, Indonesian children thus only learn *Bahasa Indonesia* in elementary school, but most of them already have a working knowledge of the language at that time due to kindergarten attendance and television watching. A few elderly people in the country cannot speak Indonesian at all, and hence stick to their local languages. In Yogyakarta I have experienced this a few times,

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[76] QS 43:3.
[77] QS 41:3. Cf. QS 12:2, 13:37, 16:103, 20:113, 26:195, 39:28, 41:44, 42:7, 46:12.
[78] Hence, Indonesian speaking Muslims are more numerous than their Arabic speaking equivalents.

when my Indonesian has been returned by questions in Javanese, or even Dutch (!). This phenomenon will be likely to soon have vanished, however, as young people are rather eager to learn (proper) Indonesian. In fact, it is not uncommon that Indonesian is regarded as 'modern' in comparison to local Indonesian languages, and thus as a key to 'progress' and 'development.' Being influenced by this line of reasoning, some people choose to use Indonesian only with their children, and thus ensure the slow extinction of local languages. (Otherwise, it is mostly children in mixed marriages who drop their parents' local languages in favor of Indonesian.)

As the country's official language, *Bahasa Indonesia* is used in all schools (from kindergarten to university), in the state bureaucracy, in national (and most local) TV, in newspapers, and in magazines. Almost all published books are written in Indonesian, and public discussions and debates are invariably held in this language. As such, much research may be conducted in Indonesia by way of this language only.

I began my study of *Bahasa Indonesia* at Lund University, Sweden, and continued after that with studies at a private language school in Yogyakarta. There I sat (alone) with my teacher for four hours per day (five days a week) for as long as two months, and spent much of my 'spare time' doing homework. My kind (and Catholic) main *guru*, Mas Thomas, had me read some select portions of a book on Islamic thought in contemporary Indonesia,[79] something which distressed me much as I had to consult my dictionary several times per line. Nevertheless, it also spurred my interest in both Indonesian Islam and the Indonesian national language. Returning home I thus continued my studies in Lund, only to return to Yogyakarta the following year with a scholarship from the Indonesian Embassy in Stockholm for studies at *Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta* (UNY)[80] during an academic year. I was rather satisfied that I was not placed at the more popular *Universitas Gajah Mada* (UGM) in Yogyakarta, as the relatively high number of foreigners studying there seems to stifle the sought after linguistic development. At UNY, on the other hand, I enjoyed myself much and stayed not only for the planned academic year, but for almost three. My knowledge—active and passive—of the Indonesian national language is thus sufficient in most contexts. Unfortunately, regrettably, and embarrassingly, the same cannot be said of my knowledge of the Javanese language, *Basa Jawa*.

The 'local' language of the Javanese people is the second largest member of the Austronesian family with its perhaps one hundred million speakers.[81] Compared to Indonesian, over which it exerts strong influence, *Basa Jawa* is a rather complex language, as it contains different 'speech levels.' To

[79] This was Malik & Ibrahim's *Zaman Baru Islam Indonesia: Pemikiran & Aksi Politik* (1998).
[80] As I began there this educational institute and university-to-be was still named *Institut Keguruan Ilmu Pendidikan* (IKIP).
[81] Robson estimates that half of the Indonesian population is Javanese-speaking (2002: 7). Note that people in West Java do not speak Javanese but rather Sundanese.

simplify, we can say that *ngoko*, or 'low Javanese,' is used among intimate friends, whereas *krama*, 'high Javanese,' is used when addressing someone of superior status.[82] In each speech-situation, Javanese-speaking people must then (quickly) determine the relationship between those partaking in the conversation so as to assure that the culturally correct language level is used. This is distressing to many—primarily younger—Javanese, who feel that they do not master *krama* Javanese that well, and thus run the risk of insulting those they talk to. (As a result *Bahasa Indonesia* may, if possible, be used instead.) To illustrate the difference between *ngoko* and *krama* Javanese, let us consider the following simple sentence: "I am going to buy that house." Speaking to one's intimate friends one would say *Aku arep tuku omah iku*. However, addressing an elder or in any other way superior Javanese, one would have to say *Kula badhe tumbas dalem punika*. The difference between the two can thus be rather profound, although there are similarities between them too. Many 'religious' terms in Javanese coincide with the Indonesian (due to their Arabic origin); in such cases, only the Indonesian form has been pointed out in this work.

My knowledge of *Basa Jawa* is limited to a passive understanding of what is being said. I am thus likely to understand the basic meaning of a conversation in Javanese, at the same time as I am rather unlikely to contribute to it (in Javanese) in any meaningful way. As mentioned above, this has not been a problem since the usage of Indonesian is possible in most instances. Moreover, virtually all written material in contemporary Indonesia makes use of the national language, at the obvious cost of their local dittos.

SPELLING, TRANSLITERATION, AND TRANSLATION

Indonesian words in this work are rendered in accordance with the standard Indonesian spelling system that followed the spelling reform in the 1970s. Diacritics that are occasionally used to mark different types of 'e' (e, é, è) have been omitted. The spelling of Javanese is slightly more problematic, but I have chosen to omit all diacritics in this context too. Furthermore, all sorts of 'a', despite some being pronounced—and hence occasionally written—as 'o' (as in 'song'), have been rendered here simply as 'a.'

When it comes to Indonesian transliteration of Arabic words, no standard system is prevailing. The Arabic word رمضان (*Ramaḍān*) may thus be given in Indonesian texts as *Ramadlan*, *Ramadhan*, *Romadlon*, *Romadhan*, or *Ramadon*. Similarly, the Arabic صلاة (*ṣalāh*) may be given as either *salat*, *shalat*, *sholat*, or *solat*. I have decided to use the forms I find are most widely accepted in contemporary Java/Indonesia (in these two cases *Ramadhan* and

[82] In addition, *madya* is a compromise between these two, whereas *krama* sometimes is divided into *krama inggil* ('high *krama*') and *krama andhap* ('low *krama*').

sholat), although this leads to some inconsistencies. The Arabic letter ض (*ḍād*) may, for example, be rendered as both *dh* and *dl* in Indonesianized Arabic words in this work, depending on the specific word. Note also that Arabic dual and plural forms only rarely are used in Indonesian; the Indonesian *hadits* thus generally represents both Arabic terms *ḥadīth* and *aḥādīth*.

Arabic words and expressions that I choose not to render according to the Indonesian way have been transliterated according to the system employed by Hans Wehr in his widely used *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, with some important alterations. I follow Wehr in that he respects the sound alteration which follows the so-called sun letters (A. *al-ḥurūfu sh-shamsīyah*), and have thus transliterated 'the people' not as *al-nās* but as *an-nās*. I also appreciate that Wehr does not conform to the common practice of replacing some—randomly selected?—final *ṭā marbūṭah* ('h') with a final 't', as in *ṣalāt* and *zakāt*. Instead, one will find the forms *ṣalāh* and *zakāh* in this work. I have been careful to set out this final *ṭā marbūṭah* in all instances, and one thus finds the form *jāhilīyah* and not *jāhilīya* in the present work, and *ākhirah* and *ruʾyah* instead of *ākhira* and *ruʾya.* The reason for this is twofold: firstly, this final 'h' is a letter as good as any else, and as such it has its own sound and meaning, although it may be hard for European speaking people to pronounce it. Secondly, this h-sound turns into a 't' should the word it is ending be followed by another word, and it is thus easier for us to see from where that 't' comes if we have grown accustomed to using the final 'h.' *Ruʾyah* thus becomes *ruʾyatu l-hilāl*, for example. Moreover, composites and expressions have been given in a form that comes close to their pronunciation, and the reason for this is that the common way of Indonesianizing Arabic also uses this method. The last chapter of the Koran I thus refer to by *sūratu n-nās*, instead of the commonplace *sūrat al-nās* or *sūrat an-nās.* The transliterated Arabic in its 'Western' and Indonesian forms thus look rather alike.

Diverging from Wehr, the Arabic letters ث, خ, ذ, ش, and غ have been transliterated in the present work as *th*, *kh*, *dh*, *sh*, and *gh* respectively (thus replacing Wehr's *t̲*, *k̲h̲*, *d̲*, *š*, and *ḡ*). Words which have a common English rendering have generally been given in that Anglicized form. I thus speak of Ramadan instead of *Ramaḍān*, of the Koran instead of *al-Qurʾān*, and of Muhammad instead of *Muḥammad*. Finally, names of authors are rendered as the authors themselves have rendered them. I thus speak of Yusuf Ali instead of Yūsuf ᶜAlī, and (conversely) of ᶜAbdul Ḥamīd Ṣiddīqī instead of Abdul Hamid Siddiqi. (Needless to mention, the original forms have been kept in direct quotations.)

Unless otherwise stated, all translations in this work are that of the author; the main exceptions to this rule being Koranic and *ḥadīthic* quotes. Quotes from the Koran follow the translation-cum-exegesis (A. *tafsīr*) of Muhammad Asad and his *The Message of the Qurʾān* (1980). As a result of this, all Koranic quotes are given in accordance with the Cairo edition. The

majority of the prophetic traditions—which are from the collections of Muslim and Bukhārī—, on the other hand, follow the translations of ᶜAbdul Ḥamīd Ṣiddīqī and his *Saḥīh Muslim by Imām Muslim* and Muhammad Muhsin Khan's *The Translation of the Meanings of Sahih Al-Bukhari*. In addition, the Islamic Server of MSA-USC [http://www.usc.edu/dept/MSA], a part of which is an electronic rendering of the two works just mentioned, has also been consulted.

As a rule, longer quotes are rendered in English in the main text whereas the original forms are preserved in footnotes. In other cases, the use of brackets assures that certain words and concepts have been kept in their original style in the text. The extensive use of foreign words, phrases, and lengthy quotes hopes to facilitate the reading for the linguistically interested, and for those who have experience from non-Indonesian Islamic societies.

Finally, illogical usage of the English plural form has been avoided, both in Indonesian and Arabic words. There are consequently no *masjid*s or *sholat*s mentioned in this work.

FIELDWORK AND INFORMANTS, OR (RATHER) SPENDING TIME WITH FRIENDS

Although being formally enrolled as a PhD student when I embarked to Southeast Asia in 1999, I had no plan at the time of completing my doctoral studies. Instead, I was just to travel in southern Thailand and Malaysia for a couple of months before 'settling down' in Yogyakarta for language studies at the Yogyakarta State University. To write an academic dissertation was as far from my mind as the wish to enjoy myself and to try life in a foreign culture was close to it. I did consequently not search for a suitable 'field location' as I arrived in Yogyakarta, but rather just tried to find a pleasant place to stay. After a few weeks at a small hostel I found what I thought I was looking for by way of an ad in a local newspaper: a small house just to the south of the sultan's palace (*kraton*) to let for a fair amount of *rupiah*. I appreciated the proximity to the *kraton* as I was attracted to Javanese culture and language (at this time I had not yet realized that there are Javas away from the *kraton*!), and come to share the house with another European student. I enjoyed it quite well there, but a variety of reasons made me leave the house after only a couple of months. After having surveyed Yogyakarta for some time on my newly bought Vespa, I had understood that I would find it more pleasant to live in the northern parts of the city, where irrigated rice fields, buffalos, the slightly cleaner air, and the lesser distance to my campus seemed attractive. As it happened, I moved during the first few days of Ramadan that year and came to occupy a small house together with a student of Islamic law from southern Thailand. The decision to move had nothing to do with me searching for a better 'field location' as I still was disinterested in conducting any kind of 'fieldwork.' I liked the simple house and its vicinity

so much that I stayed there—first with the Thai student and later with my wife—until the day I left Indonesia for that time in 2002.

I was soon familiar with this new neighborhood and made both friends and acquaintances there; some temporary, some probably life-long. I spent some time in the neighborhood mosque—located only a few houses away—each day in connection with the daily prayers (I. *sholat*, A. *ṣalāh*), and as I moved in Ramadan, I very soon came to meet most people in the vicinity during the nightly supererogatory prayers (I. *tarawih*, A. *tarāwīḥ*). Before long I became what I would call a 'familiar stranger' and interacted in various ways (through, amongst other things, soccer games on the Day of Independence, dawn lectures in the mosque, and small talk at the simple food stall) with different people. Due to the neighborhood's proximity to a few campuses, there was a large segment of students living in the area, and this perhaps facilitated my social life as many of them were as curious of my ways as I was of theirs. I also socialized with non-students, however, and most of them I met in the mosque or at one of the many food stalls in the surrounding area. The family (consisting of a middle aged couple and their three children) from whom I rented the house also became good friends of mine. During a few months, I acted private English tutor to some rather well-off families and thus got to partake in their daily lives too. In addition I also gained insight into the Thai Muslim community in Yogyakarta by way of my housemate. This was interesting since the Thai Muslims often were curious about Javanese ways too, and easily could point out where Javanese Muslim practices differed from their Pattani equivalents.

At my own campus, I also made quiet a few friends before long, and spent many hours each week talking about large and small, life and living, death and dying, girls and possible wives, culture and religion. As the vast majority of the students (approximately some ninety percent) were females at my department, most of my friends at campus were young women. Interestingly, they were rather eager to talk to me and I could thus gain an entrance to their religious lives. Such insights are valuable and commonly hard to attain for men as male-female interaction frequently is—to a greater or lesser degree—limited in Muslim communities.

Early on during my stay in Yogyakarta did I meet a remarkable young woman, who was kind enough to invite me and a Thai female student at my campus to her home in Blora. She had sensed my interest in Javanese culture and figured it would be fun for me to attend a wedding that was to be held within her extended family. I accepted, of course, and was warmly welcomed in her parental home; indeed, her parents showed to be very kind. As it happened, I came to spend quite a lot of time in their home over the years to come, primarily during weekends and holidays. (Blora is a five to six hour bus ride from Yogyakarta; a Vespa ride is slightly faster and more adventurous.) Soon enough, the remarkable young woman and I got married in Blora.

I hence got a large net of contacts of family and friends (to the family) in Blora and its vicinity. However, I was yet to discover my returning wish to

finish my doctoral studies, and had still no plans whatsoever of conducting 'fieldwork' in the common sense of the term. Instead I just tried to adapt to my new life as a member of a Javanese family, and this I did by partaking in various activities: social, cultural, religious, etc. I was very eager to learn about Javanese ways; after all, my wife was Javanese and I lived in Java.

Ethnographic information in this thesis is thus largely based on my socialization with members of the two groups mentioned above: the mainly young student group in Yogyakarta, and the group mainly consisting of families in Blora. Both groups are dominated by 'ordinary Muslims' (see below). Some additional 'data' have been achieved in connection with travels throughout Java and neighboring Bali. (There is an interesting Muslim community in Bali.) In addition to this, I was also a keen reader of local scholarship and national newspapers and thus got views of Islam and Islamic practices from other areas in Indonesia.

It is common for anthropologists and other social scientists to talk about their 'fields' and their time in them—frequently referred to as 'fieldwork'—and about their 'informants.' I can relate to none of these terms: in my mind, Java is not a 'field' just waiting for social scientists to unravel its mysteries, and it will never become one. Neither would I feel at ease by denoting my friends and family members as 'informants,' though they surely have provided me with information. I did not arrive at Jakarta with the intention to 'conduct fieldwork,' and neither did I leave that same capital almost three years later with the feeling I had done so. Instead, I lived my (regular) life in Java, and became (rather unconsciously) engaged in what I have referred to elsewhere as 'passivity' in relation to what I was to study later.[83] I consequently became quiet well versed in the by the Javanese beloved activity of *nongkrong*, or just hanging around, and I appreciated later that there is a great advantage in not looking for 'ethnographic data' constantly. I did not carry a tape recorder with me wherever I went (I did not even own one, and still do not), and I did not conduct 'interviews' in the technical sense anthropologists seem to love to do (which probably would have made me feel as if I was to make a diagnosis of those I was talking to). Fortunately, I kept notes during my time in Java, just as I had done earlier in Sweden and at other places. I thus wrote down both day-to-day experiences and more extraordinary events, and added to them peculiar, funny, interesting, and disgusting quotes from friends and acquaintances. A trained anthropologist would call these partial (and inadequate) 'field notes.' In addition, I filed a lot of information in memory and in experiences.

As already mentioned, I left Indonesia for Sweden in 2002. A few months later when Ramadan was about to commence, I returned, however. Now I had decided to finish my doctoral studies, and to write a dissertation on Ramadan in Java. During the two months I stayed in Indonesia that time, I did not become a social scientist with tape recorder, block notes, and handy-

[83] Möller 2003.

cam, but I did try to improve my habit of keeping notes, and I did also direct more questions concerning Ramadan to family and friends than had I done earlier. During the summer of 2004, I returned again to Java for a couple of months to confirm my views and ideas of Ramadanic fasting and Islam in Indonesia. In between these journeys, I visited Leiden and its splendid *Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* together with its *Universitetisbibliotheek.*

Descriptions of 'Islam' or 'Muslims' in a certain country or region are often based on sayings and doings of a small and (occasionally, at least) misrepresentative part of the Muslim community. Focus in such studies are habitually on national leaders, scholars, activists, intellectuals, politicians, and so on, and what more 'ordinary Muslims' say, do, believe, and not believe is frequently a neglected area of study. True, anthropologists often conduct their 'fieldwork' in rural communities far from national authorities, but they do so not to study Islam but rather to study what can be regarded as *not* Islam (see also above).

In this study, I side with Horvatich,[84] Peletz,[85] and Rössler,[86] and argue for the importance of studies of 'ordinary Muslims.' Like Horvatich, I focus in this study on the "beliefs and actions of 'ordinary' Muslims: not intellectuals, politicians, or religious leaders."[87] I do not, however, focus on rural communities here, as do the aforementioned scholars; instead, focus is on Muslims living in the two urban environments of Yogyakarta and Blora in central Java.

A problem for anyone who wishes to learn something about ordinary Javanese Muslims' views of their religion and its practices, is that many such people feel awkward of taking on the role of what they feel to be Islam's spokesman. Bluntly, they are afraid of misleading and deceiving the inquisitive foreigner, and hence encourage him to talk to some *ulama* (I., religious scholar), *imam* (I., Muslim (prayer) leader), *kyai* (I., religious teacher), or *takmir* (I., mosque official) instead, or simply avoid the subject. Direct 'confrontations' (i.e. questions or interviews) have therefore been rare in my search of an understanding of how Javanese ordinary Muslims perceive of their religion; non-formal, relaxed, day-to-day conversations have played a much greater role in this respect.

Even greater has the role of practical participation been, however. I agree fully with Charles J. Adams when he says that "the reality of religion has its locus in the experience of the devotee, and [that] scholars must, above else, subject themselves to that experience."[88] Anthropologists have long discussed the (dis)advantages of the method of 'participant observation,' a

[84] Horvatich 1997.
[85] Peletz 1997.
[86] Rössler 1997.
[87] Horvatich 1997: 184.
[88] Adams 1985: ix.

discussion we need not reiterate here. I have participated in the daily lives of my Javanese friends as much as possible, and am inclined to use Tord Olsson's terms "insights through participation" and "experience through practice"[89] on behalf of the more classic 'participant observation.' One of the advantages of these terms is that they (may) convey an understanding of how texts, dogmas, and ritual practice are deeply rooted and established in bodily postures and movements. Articles of faith, so to say, are imbedded in physical movements, and these movements, when performed, actualizes and legitimizes at the same time that article of faith.[90] In order to root such bodily postures and their appurtenant dogmas in the foreigner's own body, extended sojourns in the studied community are required. Eventually, insights through participation and experience through practice may be achieved.

Finally, a few words on the effects of my presence at various locations may be at place. Whereas I came to feel—and be regarded, I believe—as a 'familiar stranger' in my neighborhoods in both Yogyakarta and Blora, my presence in mosques or at other ritual locations occasionally influenced the ritual proceedings. For example, I happened to attend my first *slametan* (J., a ritual gathering for the neighborhood men in which prayers are recited and blessed food distributed) in a small village in the mountainous area of Temanggung. I was there only for a few days (in the company of a friend who was native to the area, and was eager to let me witness the tobacco harvest) and was the object of much curiosity. The same day we arrived a man had passed away, and we were invited to the death *slametan* that was to be held later that same evening. As the collective recitation of the Koran and the *zikir* (I., 'recollection' of God's names, A. *dhikr*) session were completed that night, focus quickly changed from the Arabic litanies and the soul of the deceased to the life of Swedish farmers and the nature of Western immorality. Hence, I was in focus. This left me with an awkward feeling as I was plagued by the idea that death rituals should be about sorrow and grief, rather than about sweet tea, cookies, laughter, and (inadequate) reports on farming from foreigners. I felt I had attracted the attention and consideration that in all fairness should be directed towards the deceased. I was later to learn that death in Java is not as sorrowful as it is in the West—this partly relieved me of the feeling of unease—, but it was nevertheless obvious that my presence had influenced the ritual to take on a different turn compared to if I had not been there. This also happened at other *slametan* occasions.

My presence in the neighborhood mosques did also create some disruption initially, but even this disruption was all but exaggerated. It consisted mainly in difficulties of concentration on behalf of the rest of the congregation, and was easily resolved after the ritual proper by means of extensive talks and discussions. Soon I was regarded as nothing extraordinary, although younger children often had a hard time not peeping and laughing at me.

[89] Olsson 2000: 19.
[90] Olsson 2000: 19.

Whenever I visited mosques other than those of my neighborhoods, my presence usually stirred a great interest from those others present. As the Javanese generally are rather talkative, this meant some lengthy post-ritual conversations. On the whole, however, I am of the conviction that my presence has influenced ritual proceedings to a small degree only, and definitely not in any substantial way.

NON-ETHNOGRAPHIC MATERIAL

This work is not solely dedicated to the ethnographic study of how the Javanese celebrate Ramadan, as the previous section might have seemed to suggest. Rather, my notes collected during a period of 'fieldwork' are just part of the material used in this study. In addition, I have collected a wide range of contemporary Indonesian media expressions concerning Ramadan—including Ramadanic handbooks, newspaper articles, recorded sermons, short stories, songs, and poems—all of which I treat here as 'texts.' The relevant sections in the 'classical' Islamic sources, the Koran and the prophetic traditions, are also given some attention. None of these are regarded as superior to the others, as will be discussed below, but rather only as parts of a common system or complex (known to us as something like 'Ramadan in contemporary Java').

THEORIES AND AIMS

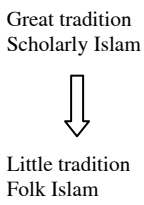
HOW TO STUDY MUSLIM SOCIETIES

Above I discussed the academic marginalization enterprise Islam and its rituals have been the subject of in Southeast Asia. I accordingly drew attention to the fact that anthropologists, scholars of Islam and Asian Studies scholars all have marginalized Islam in Indonesia and Java in their own peculiar ways. I will now propose an alternative way for studying Islam in (Southeast Asian) Muslim societies. Before that we will, however, need to throw a quick glance at some previous ways of doing this.

Anthropologists (and travelers, journalists, etc.) working and living in Muslim societies have often portrayed Islam in its local contexts as being (latently, at least) in constant contradiction with scriptural or normative Islam. There has also been a recurring tendency to depict Sufism, or Islamic mysticism, as standing somewhat apart from 'real' Islam. Islam in this way has been reduced to the Islam of legal textbooks and the legal decisions by Islamic scholars. Everything else—especially day-to-day Islam and minor deviations from these textbooks—has been deemed un-Islamic, or—in the

words used above—as *not* Islam. Further, it has been taken for granted that the relationship between normative or scriptural Islam on the one hand, and actual or folk Islam on the other, has been like that between the elite and the masses, or even between revealed religion and magic.

Redfield,[91] and many with him, talked about a great and a little tradition, whereas Gellner[92] rather talked about scholarly Islam and folk Islam. Common to these two designations (and numerous other working from the same perspective)[93] is that they schematically would look something like this:



The great tradition (scholarly Islam) is thus in every possible way located *above* the little tradition (folk Islam), and it is evident that it is the former that should represent what Islam 'really is.' As the Danish historian of religion Kate Østergaard has noted, the usage of these terms has come to involve an evaluation of the traditions, in which the great tradition always is thought to be superior to the little one.[94]

Not surprisingly, ideas like these have been the subject of much criticism. (Surprisingly is it, however, that they nevertheless persist in various contexts.) More sensitive scholarship has thus talked about a "creative tension" between these two entities,[95] and drawn attention to the fact that they must not be in constant contradiction.[96] In addition, a wide range of allegedly more neutral terms has been suggested: official, formal, normative, universalist, essential, popular, practical, local, informal, and received Islam(s). The picture then changes to something like this:

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[91] Redfield 1956. Though Redfield mostly is concerned with what he calls "peasant society" and "peasant culture," he seems to suggest that his ideas have wide applicability. He speaks of a "great tradition" and a "little tradition" and says that "[i]n a civilization there is a great tradition of the reflective few, and there is a little tradition of the largely unreflective many." Further, "[t]he great tradition is cultivated in schools and temples; the little tradition works itself out and keeps itself going in the lives of the unlettered in their village communities" (1956: 70). Nevertheless, he also acknowledges that there is some interdependency and interaction between the two: the "[g]reat tradition and [the] little tradition have long affeced each other and continue to do so" (1956: 71). Strengthening his argument for the case of Islam, he cites von Grunebaum (1955), who also has discussed a large and and a little tradition in Muslim societies.

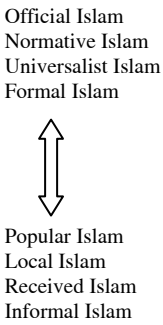
[92] Gellner 1981: 5.

[93] See Lukens-Bull 1999 for a recent discussion (with special reference to Indonesia) of various anthropological approaches to the study of Islam.

[94] Østergaard 1994: 3.

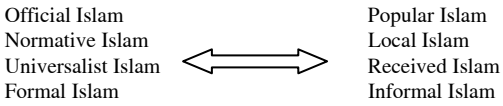
[95] Hefner 1997a: 8.

[96] See for example Østergaard (1994: 8) and Buitelaar (1993: 6) for examples relevant to the Ramadanic fast.

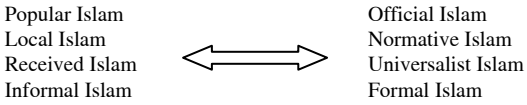


This picture acknowledges that there is a "creative tension"—to use Hefner's apt words again—between these different 'versions' of Islam instead of the earlier one-way (forced) influence, and that they by necessity not need to be in contradiction with each other. Nevertheless, the general picture is still that the equivalents of Redfield's great tradition still are situated *above* those of his little tradition, and assessments concerning the value of them keep flourishing—consciously or unconsciously.

We must then flip the picture into a horizontal position...



... and realize that it could just as well be the other way around:

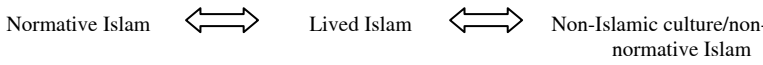


The two versions of Islam are then situated on the same level, and none of them is 'more Islamic' or closer to the heart of 'true Islam' than the other. Furthermore, they differ in some—not all!—respects, but they are not in a perpetual relation of opposition and antagonism.

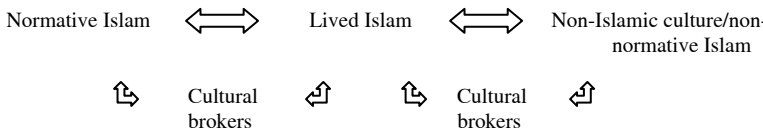
We may choose to call these 'versions' of Islam just about whatever we like. Without denouncing the others here, I choose to use 'normative' and 'lived' Islam in this work, both of which I find advantageous.[97] In addition, I also realize that there is always something that we can denote as non-Islamic

[97] The terms 'actual Islam' and 'practical Islam' can also be found in the present work, but then as synonyms to 'lived Islam.'

culture, or, perhaps, as non-normative Islam. The term 'normative Islam' becomes useful if we define it as Jacques Waardenburg has done, namely as "what Islam is held to prescribe."[98] In other words, normative Islam refers to the norms (including both practices and beliefs) that Muslims (in a certain context) perceive their religion provides them with. (The non-Islamic culture/non-normative Islam, on the other hand, refers to practices and beliefs that are thought to be *not* prescribed by Islam, but not necessarily in contradiction to it.) It is then normative in its own ways in different historical and cultural contexts, although a certain (and probably quite large in the case of the prescribed rituals) coherence can be expected. In this way, normative (and non-normative) Islam is as subject to changes as its 'lived' equivalent. The term 'lived Islam' is useful in that it draws attention to the simple fact that there can be no Islam without (living) Muslims. Its largest advantage, however, is that it is wide enough to include both normative and more non-normative aspects of Islam. Lived Islam then is not just what normative Islam is not, but rather incorporates elements from both normative Islam and the non-Islamic culture/non-normative Islam. I thus suggest a picture like this (that, of course, could have been presented the other way around, i.e., beginning with the non-Islamic culture):



To this picture we need to add, however, what I refer to as 'written Islam.' With this term I refer to various popular media expressions—including monographs, articles, songs, recorded sermons, poems, web sites, etc.—[99]that Muslims at such a high pace generate in the contemporary world. I set out with the idea that we may regard this written Islam in its various forms as 'cultural brokers' that operate between the two versions of Islam (and the non-Islamic culture) presented above. I thus figured that these 'cultural brokers' had one leg in each camp (normative and practical Ramadan) and that they could mediate between them or perhaps even make them communicate.



[98] Waardenburg 2002: 99. Note that chapter five (pp. 85-110) in Waardenburg 2002 is a revised version of Waardenburg 1979. Waardenburg suggests the usage of 'normative Islam' but is inclined to make continued use himself of 'official Islam' (Cf. Waardenburg 2002: 101, 102).
[99] All of these can be regarded as 'texts;' hence the term 'written Islam.'

As will become evident later in this work, written Islam is not always as good mediators or brokers as one (read: the author) might expect. This is not to say that we need not take local scholarship and popular media expressions seriously; rather, we *must* discuss this written Islam if we are to gain a more nuanced and more comprehensive picture of the Muslim society we are studying. In sum, I argue that (practices in) Muslim societies best are studied from three angles: the normative, the written, and the lived angle. In addition, special attention will have to be paid the historical and geographical/cultural situation. The present work thus focuses on normative, written, and lived Ramadan in a Javanese contemporary context.

NIAT: INTENTIONS

Muslim Javanese friends seem to never grow tired of stressing the importance of *niat* (I., A. *nīyah*) in whatever we—Muslims, Christians, Buddhists, humans—do. The lexical understanding of this term is 'intention,' but there is more to it than that: it seems to mean intention in the sense *rightly guided intention*. Having such an intention, one should state it aloud or at least in one's heart, and one must be totally clear in this intent. If the intent is sincere, it will be divinely rewarded, and this is true even if the intended action never materializes. This probably does not hold true in academic contexts, but stating one's intents surely has its advantages. Hence, the intent of the following thesis is to:

- discuss the Arabic normative, textual, theoretical, and legitimizing foundations of Ramadan [normative Ramadan],
- discuss a variety of Indonesian media expressions Ramadan recently has generated [written Ramadan],
- discuss how Ramadan is lived and experienced in contemporary Java [lived Ramadan], and
- discuss how these three entities relate to each other.

In doing this, I will also focus on questions pertaining to:

- the nature of Islam in present-day Indonesia,
- ways in which Islam preferably may be studied,
- the academic neglect both Javanese Islam and Islamic rituals have experienced, and
- the relationship between faith and practice.

Further, I begin this thesis by working from some ideas I later partly refute, namely that:

- important actors on the scene of Javanese (ritual, or religious) Islam include traditionalists, modernists, radicals, liberals, and Sufis, and that
- contemporary media expressions on Ramadan may work as 'cultural brokers' between 'normative' and 'practical' Ramadan.

I also begin this work from some other ideas that prove to be more reasonable. They include the ideas that:

- 'normative' and 'practical' religious practices in Indonesia (and elsewhere) do not necessarily contradict each other, and that
- Javanese (Muslims) are rather *alus*, or refined, and that they thus can negotiate and accept differing religious practices in their community.

DISPOSITION

A few words on the disposition of the present work may be suitable. Apart from this introductory chapter, the work is divided into six chapters—the last one being conclusive in character.

In chapter two, I discuss the nature of Islam in Java, as seen from three angles: its history, its actors, and the previous research it has generated. I do not present a comprehensive historical survey of Islam in Java or Indonesia in this chapter, but rather focus on some periods which are of immediate interest to us. Hence, special attention is paid the early Islamization of the island, and the recent Islamic resurgence which has widely affected the religious life in Java. In discussing the different 'actors' that operate on the contemporary Islamic landscape in Java I focus on the Sufis, the modernists and the traditionalists, but also pay some attention to the Muslim radicals and liberals in Indonesia, and to the Department for Religious Affairs (*Departemen Agama*) and the Indonesian Council of Religious Scholars *(Majelis Ulama Indonesia*). Finally, I also consider some of the more important works Islam in Java has instigated. I discern two large 'schools' of scholars of Islam in Java: the first neglecting the Islamic influence on Javanese culture, the other emphasizing it. Personally, I am inclined to side with the latter.

The subsequent chapter turns to what I refer to as 'normative Ramadan,' that is, to the Koranic and *ḥadīthic* text passages associated with Ramadan and to the consensus of the scholars of the different law schools. I also discuss the position of the Koran and the traditions within Islam, and the Javanese relation to these entities. The Javanese relation to the law schools is also paid some attention. Readers may react that I in this chapter discuss the relevant Koranic passages as if I myself was a Muslim theologian or exegete,

but this is naturally not the case. I only try to convey a picture of Ramadan that could be accepted as 'normative' by most Muslims (in Indonesia) today. It goes without saying that such an attempt by necessity is generalizing in character.

In chapter four, focus is on contemporary and popular Indonesian media expressions on Ramadan. I argue here that we need to take local Muslim scholarship seriously, and that Javanese Muslims are more concerned with the right practices than with the right beliefs in relation to Ramadan. This can be clearly seen from the Ramadanic handbooks, which I discuss at some length. I also turn my attention in this chapter to Ramadanic newspaper articles, recorded sermons, music, poetry, short stories, websites, and television programmes. On the whole, we get a rather sympathetic picture of Indonesian Ramadan in these works, all of which belong to what I refer to as 'written Ramadan.'

Chapter five is devoted to the actual and contemporary Javanese observance of the fasting month—the 'lived Ramadan.' I begin this chapter with discussing Ramadanic preparations in the month of *Ruwah*, and continue with Ramadan proper before concluding with a short treatment of the month in which things 'go back to normal,' i.e., the month of *Sawal*. In considering the lived Ramadan in Java, I choose to highlight quiet a few representative aspects of Ramadanic fasting, and thus provide a rather comprehensive picture of how Ramadan is observed in the island.

In the following chapter (six), I turn my attention to some ventures of comparisons. In the first section, I discuss the inner organization of Javanese Ramadan by focusing on the relationship between normative, written, and actual Ramadan, as they have been discussed in previous chapters. We learn that there exists no standard relationship between these entities, but rather that we have to approach each aspect of Ramadanic fasting in Java in its own right. In the second section of the chapter, we temporarily leave Java to see how Ramadan is observed in other Muslim contemporary contexts. I thus discuss the scanty English literature on lived Ramadan in other societies, and this section then also becomes a critique and review of the previous research on Ramadan.

The last and conclusive chapter sums up what has been said so far, and adds some more analytical discussions of how we may understand Ramadan in its contemporary Javanese context. Some propositions for further research are also given in connection with this. At the end of the thesis, a glossary and a list of references are to be found.

Presenting the chapter on normative, written, and lived Ramadan in that order might suggest that I regard the normative 'version' of Ramadan to be the one against which everything else should have its legitimacy and degree of orthodoxy measured. It might, so to say, look like a theological disposition. Nothing could be more wrong, however. I argue that these three 'Ramadans' have their own basis of legitimacy and that none of them is more 'correct' than the others. The reason I choose to begin with normative Rama-

dan here is the hope that the reader will find the subsequent discussions more intelligible if she already has an initial understanding of what Ramadan is thought to be in a normative sense. Without this knowledge, she would probably find many of the discussions in the chapters on written and lived Ramadan hard to understand, and even disturbingly set free from their proper contexts. Had I presented these three chapters in the reversed order (lived, written, normative Ramadan), on the other hand, one could also easily accuse me of presenting the normative Ramadan at the end as if it was the key, in whose shadow written and lived Ramadan should be understood. All things considered, I choose here to present normative Ramadan before its written and lived equivalents.

CHAPTER TWO

ISLAM IN JAVA
HISTORY, ACTORS, AND PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Through discussing its history and actors, together with the research it has previously been the subject of, this chapter will convey an introductory assessment of Islam in Java. As such, its objective is to provide the reader with sufficient contextual material to make subsequent discussions more intelligible and interesting. Note that it does not pretended to give neither an extensive nor a cohesive account of Javanese Islam—sufficient references in the text ensure, however, that such an appraisal may be done by the reader.

The chapter consists of three major sections: the first pertains to some historical considerations, the second discusses the 'actors' of the contemporary Javanese Islamic society, and in the final section, parts of the previous research is commented upon. Of these three, an emphasis is put on the middle part. The lines of demarcation between these sections are not as stiff as this division initially may signify; in fact, extensive overlapping occurs. Consequently, some actors will appear under the heading of historical considerations, whereas historical discussions not are exclusive to the second section. Likewise, earlier research is commented upon in all three sections—and indeed, throughout this study—although there is a concentrated discussion concerning this topic in the last section of the chapter. In one sentence, I argue here that the character of Islam in contemporary Java is both multifaceted and partly misunderstood, and that the history of Javanese Islam has been one of slow—but increasingly fast and steady—movement towards what could be denoted as an Islamic 'orthodoxy' (or, rather, 'orthopraxy').

The entire chapter is almost exclusively based on secondary literature—Western and Indonesian—but the text is, for clarifying and perhaps entertain-

ing reasons, occasionally punctuated by some personal reflections and experiences.

HISTORICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Presented below is not a history of Islam in Indonesia or Java, but rather a discussion of some historical events and developments that are of significance for the present context. I will focus on the initial and contemporary history of Islam in the archipelago and consciously disregard much of the development that took place between these two points in history. I am painfully aware that this rather ahistorical approach on the surface seems to share some common features with Islamist interpretations of Islam (and history). My reasons to largely ignore the 'middle period' of Islamic history in Java, however, differ from those of the Islamists. It is the scarcity of sources and their vague character that has led me to disregard large portions of this history, and not a principal disinterest in—or denial of—the importance of this process. One may ponder upon the seemingly strange fact that the earliest part of the Islamization of the Indonesian archipelago so often is reconstructed, whereas the centuries to come are generally omitted in both popular and academic Indonesian accounts. How can it be that we have relatively much material from the initial period of this process, whereas we are faced with a scarcity of material in later periods? I argue that this condition is closely associated with the mythological character of the stories concerned with this period of historical change. The bibliographies of the propagators of Islam in Java, the so-called *Wali Sanga* (J., the Nine Saints) are heavily deviant from what is normally regarded as sound historicity, and the *wali* may be preferably regarded as 'founders' of a new religion in Java.[1] As such, their mythic-historic life-histories with their remarkable achievements and virtues have stimulated the Javanese from the earliest of times, who, consequently, have preserved them well. This is one reason for paying special attention to this early period of Islamization. Another is that the Javanese themselves repeatedly make reference to this period when assessing the contemporary Islamic landscape in Indonesia. This section then particularly heeds two distinct periods of religious history in Java, but I will have *something* to say on the long development that these two periods together embrace.

[1] Naturally, they are not founders in the sense of being prophets that bring forth new dogmas, rituals, holy writs and the like, but rather in the sense of them being the ones who laid the foundations for Islam in Java.

One could perhaps argue that the problems related to the coming of Islam to the Indonesian archipelago[2] are of minor concern for the present work—and, hence, need not be discussed—but a short introduction will be necessary in order to better understand the contemporary character of Indonesian Islam. Indonesian Muslims generally, and Javanese specifically, make frequent references themselves to the early days of Islam in the region when they reflect upon the nature of present-day Indonesian Islam, and I believe there are reasons for us to be incited to do the same.[3]

When and where?

That Muslim presence in the Indonesian archipelago is almost as old as Islam itself is a sound historical probability, taking into consideration that the Chinese court received Arab Muslim emissaries already during the time of the third caliph (A. *khalīfah*), ᶜUthmān bin ᶜAffān (664-656).[4] When and why actual conversion among Indonesians began to occur is, however, still shrouded in doubt, and a variety of theories—some of which will be shortly discussed below—have been presented. It is highly probable that we will never get a clear picture of the (early) Islamization of the archipelago. This is first and foremost due to the fact that records—both archeological and textual—of this process are as few as they are uninformative.[5] Moreover, scholars who have occupied themselves with this process of historical change have made such confusing and diffusing use of the very term Islamization that it is hard to grasp the result of their research.[6]

In the literature on the subject, mention—following Marco Polo's well-known traveler's report—is invariably made of Perlak and Samudra-Pasé in North Sumatra, which consitutes the proposed "cradle of Islam in Indonesia."[7] Alatas, for example, says that the seaport of Perlak was "converted to Islam by 1291 or 1292;"[8] Ricklefs similarly states that it constituted an "Is-

[2] Of course, there was no idea of an 'Indonesia' at this time. When I use the designation in this chapter, I refer to the geographical area of what today corresponds to the modern nation-state of Indonesia (and to some extent Malaysia).
[3] The local Javanese understanding of the early Islamization and its emphasis on the role of the half-mythical *Wali Sanga* will be discussed below.
[4] Ricklefs 1993: 3. It seems thinkable that these emissaries made usage of the sea routes during their voyages, and that they made at least occasional stops in the Indonesian archipelago.
[5] In Drewes' words, "One must be grateful when the devastating tropical climate with its excessive heat and abundant rainfall has at least left something in the way of less perishable objects, such as gravestones, to make use of" (1968: 434). However, some Chinese sources are valuable in this respect.
[6] Möller 1998.
[7] Drewes 1968: 447.
[8] Alatas 1985: 165.

lamic state" [*sic*] by this time;[9] and Johns argues that there indeed is evidence of an "Islamic port city" at the end of the thirteenth century in the northern parts of Sumatra.[10] These statements are all puzzling, and in their aftermath emerges several interrelated problems. The mentioned scholars seem to agree that a geographical area can be said to have adopted a specific religion at a specific time in history. Apart from this being a misleading reduction of human beings into a spatial entity, we must also question what these scholars—again following Marco Polo—meant by their usage of the terms "Islamic state" and "Islamic city." Did they mean, for example, that a majority of the population had converted at this time? Or that Islamic rituals were widely practiced? Or that the classical texts of Islam constituted a fundament for local jurisprudence? Or did they, perhaps, mean that the ruler had converted? And so on. Further, we should probably also be careful in stating a specific year when the Islamization of an area was fulfilled, as these reports seem to do.[11] True, Johns statements reflect a healthy carefulness in that he says that the Islamization of the archipelago was a gradual religious transformation that is neither easily understood nor to be understood as constituting a homogenous phenomena,[12] but the general stand seems to be that it is possible to mention a specific year in which a state or city was Islamized. The Moroccan traveler Ibn Baṭṭūta, who visited Sumatra in the first half of the fourteenth century, stated in his report that the ruler of Samudra was a follower of the Shāfiᶜī school of jurisprudence.[13] Indeed, a gravestone dated AH 696 (1297 CE) constitutes the first evidence of a Muslim dynasty in the Indonesian archipelago. Though we know little or nothing about the religious beliefs and practices of these early Muslim rulers—let alone of their subjects!—it seems indeed that Islam in Indonesia got its earliest firm grip in North Sumatra. Early evidence from other areas of the archipelago has, however, also been found—one of the most famous being a gravestone encountered at Leran, East Java, bearing the inscription of AH 475 (1082 CE).[14] Mention could also be made of a series of Muslim gravestones found at the royal

[9] Ricklefs 1988: 169.
[10] Johns 1993: 44.
[11] In contrast to this, many contemporary scholars argue that the Islamization of Indonesia—and other parts of the Muslim world—is a continuos process that endures to this day. (See for example van Bruinessen 1999, Hefner 1987, the contributions in Hefner & Horvatich 1997, Marijan 1998, Nakamura 1993, Ricklefs 1979, and the discussion of the recent Islamic revival below.) The present work also subscribes to that understanding of the term.
[12] Johns 1993: 44.
[13] Drewes 1968: 440, Ricklefs 1993: 4.
[14] Or, alternatively, AH 496 (1102 CE); see Drewes 1968: 454. This is the gravestone of an unknown woman named Faṭima bint Maimūn, whose origin, however, has been located outside Java. It seems probable that the gravestone was brought to Java some time after her death (perhaps as ballast on a ship), and thus tells us nothing about the question of Islamization among Indonesians (Drewes 1968: 454, Ricklefs 1993: 3f.). Interestingly, some Indonesian scholars still regard this stone as constituting strong evidence for the early Islamization of Java (see for example Anasom 2000: 28f).

cemeteries of Trawulan and Tralaya in East Java, and the stone of Trengganu in the present-day Malay Peninsula (both fourteenth century CE).[15]

Origin and early carriers

The question of Indonesian Islam's geographical origin has likewise been debated, and Drewes has made a thorough investigation of the theories that have been put forward.[16] Early research in the area suggested Arab countries generally (at times more specifically Egypt, due to the presence of the Shāfiᶜī school of jurisprudence) as the source of Islam in the archipelago. Later scholarship argued that Arabs from the West coast of India were largely responsible for the Islamization of the region, whereas the famous Dutch Indonesianist Snouck Hurgronje suggested a South Indian origin of Indonesian Islam. Apart from this, a Persian influence has been noticed in some Indonesian languages, and the influence of other parts of India, and present-day Bangladesh, has also been pointed out. Even a line of Islamic penetration in the archipelago from China, and the Arab colonies there, via Champa, has been suggested. Drewes is reluctant to make any final conclusions, and Azra too is careful in that he winds up his discussion by saying that "although numerous historians have written on this topic, there is still an open possibility for the emergence of new interpretations based on the available historical sources."[17] It seems to be an unhealthy habit of some of the scholars who have occupied themselves with this topic to search for *one* specific region which may be said to constitute the origin of Indonesian Islam; it is more probable that Muslims from several areas contributed to the Islamization of the Indonesian archipelago. Along these lines, van Bruinessen has suggested that Islam was brought to the archipelago by merchants originating along the entire coastline from South Arabia to southern China,[18] whereas Johns has simply concluded that "the provenance of Southeast Asian Islam is not a practical topic for discussion,"[19]

Given that we cannot establish the geographical origin of Indonesian Islam with any certainty, we should not be surprised that the question of exactly *who* brought Islam to the area also has puzzled scholars. Without needing to reiterate the course of that discussion here, we should make mention of Johns' early argumentation for the exclusive importance of Muslims with a Sufi inclination,[20] and also his later refinements of this theory.[21] Without

[15] For discussions of archeological findings in other areas, the interested reader is referred to Al-Attas 1971, Alatas 1985, Djajadiningrat 1958, Drewes 1968, Hooker 1983, Johns 1987, Ricklefs 1993:3ff.
[16] Drewes 1968; the below discussion is to a large extent based on this article. See also Azra (1999: 31ff) for a recent and more graspable discussion of this theme, and Hooker 1983: 4ff.
[17] Azra 1999: 33.
[18] van Bruinessen 1999.
[19] Johns 1987: 407.
[20] Johns 1961.
[21] Johns 1993, 1995.

doubt, Muslim presence in the archipelago was, at least initially, the result of the trading system of the Indian Ocean, and Muslim merchants from West and South Asia inhabited certain ports in the archipelago as early as the tenth century.[22] It seems that many of these early carriers of Islam were colored in their religiosity by mystical beliefs and practices, but one cannot, however, ascribe the Islamization of Indonesia to the appeal of Sufism alone. Consequently, in his later articles, Johns is careful to note that

> If the generalization that the Indies became Islamized due to the spiritual appeal of Sufism [as was argued in Johns 1961] was too broad, it is not necessarily wrong to say that many, of not a majority of the *'ulamā'* who played a role in the establishment of Muslim communities on Southeast Asia had Sufi affiliations. By the same token, it is certainly overly simplistic to speak tout court of Islam being brought to the Indies by traders without reference to the *'ulamā.'*[23]

This, then, leads to the conclusion that Sufism "represents only one aspect of Islamization" in the Indonesian archipelago.[24] Speaking of the nature of Islam in the early days of its presence in the region, Azra likewise says that it was "very much colored by *tasawuf* [A. *taṣawwuf*] aspects or mystical teachings of Islam, although that does not mean that legal aspects (*syariah*) [A. *sharīᶜah*] were totally neglected.[25]

As for the Islamization of Java more specifically, the scholar is faced with another problem, namely the mythological character of popular stories regarding this religious transformation. Every Javanese is to some extent familiar with the stories of the *Wali Sanga* (J., the Nine Saints; at times *Wali Songo* due to actual pronunciation), who allegedly are responsible for the dissemination of Islam in Java, and many have performed pilgrimage to at least one of their graves.[26] The question of whether or not the *Wali Sanga* should be understood as historical, mythical, or perhaps historic-mythical characters has been debated by Western scholars, but that discussion falls outside the interest of this thesis; for us, it is the Javanese standpoint that is of interest, and that is generally one of full conviction that the stories of the saints are to be taken at face value. The saints are venerated due to two rea-

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[22] Alatas 1985: 164.
[23] Johns 1993: 58; brackets added by author.
[24] Johns 1993: 59.
[25] Azra 1999: 34; brackets added by author. See also Alatas 1985: 172f, and van Bruinessen 1994a. Howell states that "it is generally agreed that Indonesian Islam before the twentieth century was predominately Sufi," and gives the relevant references (2001: 703).
[26] The *wali*s, and the locations of their graves, are as follows: Maulana Malik Ibrahim (Gresik), Sunan Ampel (Surabaya), Sunan Giri (Giri), Sunan Bonang (Tuban), Sunan Drajat (Paciran), Sunan Kudus (Kudus), Sunan Kalijaga (Demak), Sunan Muria (Colo), and Sunan Gunung Jati (Cirebon). *Sunan* is a honorary Javanese title abbreviated from *Susuhunan*, meaning 'the worshipped,' whereas *Maulana* means 'our Lord' (Djajadiningrat 1958). It is interesting to note that contemporary Indonesia has seen the emergence of a new genre of 'spiritual travel agencies' specializing in bus tours throughout Java covering the graves of these saints. Needless to say, they have proved to be very popular.

sons in contemporary Java: firstly, because they made the Javanese population Muslim, and secondly, because they succeeded in spreading Islam peacefully without harshly eliminating previous traditions. Stories of the saints' different ways to harmonize Islam and local Javanese traditions are often told, re-told, and referred to. One of the favorites in this genre tells about how Sunan Kalijaga spread the word of Islam through the traditional Javanese art forms of *gamelan* (J., classical Javanese music), *wayang* (J., shadow play performed with leather puppets), and *tembang* (J., poetry). van Dijk, who has surveyed parts of the contemporary literature on *Wali Sanga*, states that the 'admission ticket' to these art performances was—at times, at least—the pronouncement of the Muslim confession of faith.[27] He has also drawn attention to the fact that the stories of the saints are used to explain differences of Islamic affiliation in contemporary Java, that is, the saints are divided into a *santri* and an *abangan* (see below for a discussion of these terms) group depending on their methods of *dakwah* (I. from A. *daᶜwah*, propagating Islam) and attitudes towards local beliefs and practices.[28] I have never heard a Javanese make this distinction and am more inclined to agree with van Dijk when he later argues, based on Javanese contemporary works, that

> [...} the nine saints are presented as propagators of the faith who [...] behaved with tact and moderation, accepting existing culture wherever possible. They 'protected and built upon' existing customs (Ahnan 1994: 69), did not trespass upon the sensibilities of the people (Amar 1992: 13), and did not 'threaten, criticize, or frighten the population buy the introduction of various kinds of prohibitions or by issuing religious rulings banning all elements of local culture' (Bashah 1993: 102). They based their missionary activities on their 'painstaking observations and studies of the contemporaneous society' (Salam 1989: 33).[29]

Thus, local Javanese forms of religious behavior could still linger on, but were gradually Islamized, at times to the point that nothing really un-Islamic could be detected in them, and this is a point that will be further elaborated upon below.

Conversion and peacefulness

Why Indonesians finally converted to Islam is yet another debatable question. Many contemporary Javanese would perhaps say that it was due in part to the sensibility of the *Wali Sanga*, and in part to the authenticity of the Muslim message. In a more scholarly tone, Ricklefs has suggested that conversion was the result of either indigenous Indonesian interaction with foreign Muslims—and the subsequent attraction to the 'new' religion this induced—or of intermarriages between foreign Muslim men and local women.[30] Of these two

[27] van Dijk 1998: 222.
[28] van Dijk 1998: 222.
[29] van Dijk 1998: 225. Note that van Dijk's references are not listed in my references here.
[30] Ricklefs 1993: 3.

alternatives, Marijan is prone to emphasize the second.[31] Alatas has discussed some theories of why Indonesians converted,[32] but we will, however, probably never be able to understand the exact reasons Indonesians had to convert to Islam. It will likewise be hard for us to understand their own understanding of their conversion, and, indeed, of their new religion. Cummings, for example, has recently argued that Islam in seventeenth century Makassar, South Sulawesi, was largely perceived of as a matter of Arabic texts, and not a set of beliefs and practices,[33] and this finding ought to invite to new discussions of the nature of the early Islamization in the area. Discussing conversion in contemporary Indonesia, Mujiburrahman has also put doubt in the various theories of conversion, and stated that this phenomenon constitutes a "multicausal, dynamic and multifaceted process of change."[34] The author of the present thesis also recalls discussions with several young female students who had converted to Islam in Yogyakarta in the late 1990s. Most of them had decided to take on the veil (I. *jilbab*, A. *ḥijāb*), not few were very active in the campus mosque and Islamic organizations, some experienced serious problems with their families as a result of their conversion, and, symptomatically, none of them could explain more exactly the reasons for their conversion. In our discussions, it became clear that a variety of factors were at play, and that these factors—of course—were differently emphasized by the different converts.[35] The point to be made is that religious conversion in contemporary Indonesia is a multifaceted and complex act, and there are no reasons for us to believe that this was not the case with pioneer converts in the archipelago.[36]

What is important to note conclusively—and this is indeed very often noted—is that the Islamization of Southeast Asia was a largely peaceful enterprise.[37] This brings us to the very objective of the above discussion,

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[31] Marijan 1998: 20.
[32] Alatas 1985.
[33] Cummings 2001. Cf. Bowen 1993: 126f.
[34] Mujiburrahman 2001: 36.
[35] The converts themselves naturally emphasized purely religious reasons, although they could rarely define them with any precision. See Rambo (1987) for an introduction to the problem of conversion, and Brenner (1996) for an interesting discussion of Javanese Muslim women's 'conversion' to the practice of veiling.
[36] In the aftermath of the attempted *coup d'êtat* in 1965, Java also saw a mass conversion to all of the state-acknowledged religions. The motivation for these conversions was, of course, often political.
[37] E.g., Azra 1999: xvi, 37, Drewes 1968: 443, Madjid 1994: 59, Marijan 1998: 22f, Ricklefs 1985: 39. Indeed, it seems that there has been no foreign Muslim military expedition in the area, and it has become a truism in Southeast Asian studies that Islam was disseminated by peaceful means in the region. Nevertheless, once established, Islam was at times spread to other areas in the wake of warfare, though the primary catalyst behind these wars probably were not religious; see Ricklefs 1993: 14, 32ff, Hefner 1997a: 8f. And, as Reid has pointed out, not all of the early mystics were "pietistic and peace-loving" but rather "militant crusaders" (Reid 1993: 14). Note that the over-all peaceful character of the Islamization of Indonesia is valid also for later historical periods.

namely to draw attention to the alleged direct relationship between this peaceful early Islamization, and the present-day religious conditions in the region. Islam in contemporary Indonesia is invariably depicted as tolerant, moderate, pluralist and peaceful[38]—characteristics that it has, say, inherited from its own methods of arrival and dissemination in the area. Not only scholars emphasize this point; ordinary Indonesians reflecting upon their society's religious affiliations are quick to note the peaceful and tolerant character of their Islam, as are non-Indonesian Muslims. Thus, the reports on Time's and CNN's homepages on September 17th 2002, concerning the presence of 'al-Qaeda' (A. *al-qāᶜidah*) members in Indonesia, arose a small storm in the national Muslim community.[39] Although perceived of as "American disinformation,"[40] these reports gave birth to discussions concerning the nature and development of Indonesian Islam. Is Indonesian Islam—it was asked—changing its peaceful character in favor of a more radical one? And is it no longer true that the vast majority of Indonesian Muslims are moderate in their religious affiliations?[41] These and other questions were partially answered by the American ambassador to Indonesia, Ralph L. Boyce, who in a meeting with Muslim organizations in Jakarta a week later stated that the 'al-Qaeda' network in Indonesia did not involve Indonesian citizens, and that the American government (still) thought of Indonesian Islam as moderate, tolerant and peaceful.[42]

Further, several Indonesians have told me of the utterly friendly receptions they became the subjects of upon telling fellow Muslims of their geographical origin during the pilgrimage to Mecca, and how many of the non-Southeast Asian Muslims they met in Saudi Arabia also expressed their support for—and amazement with—the tolerant Indonesian Islam. One informant told me of her husband getting repeatedly hugged by a sub-Saharan African in Mecca upon revealing his geographical origin—a peculiar event which, due to linguistic problems, was never really comprehended—and others have also recalled being hugged and cheered by their fellow Muslims when announcing their domicile. (Note, however, that the evidence of a general positive picture of Indonesian Islam by non-Indonesian Muslims as revealed during the *ḥajj* are too few to make any certain conclusions.) Nevertheless, due to recent national and international developments, there seems to be in the making a change of attitudes towards Indonesian Islam. Hefner notes that Middle Eastern intellectuals do no longer regard Indonesia as a "center of civil-pluralist Islam" but rather "wonder whether this country is not descending into neofundamentalist vigilantism."[43] Since the commence-

[38] E.g., Azra 2002a, Hefner 1997a: 29, Hefner 1997b: 115, Tibi 1995, Tibi 1998: 184.
[39] [http://www.time.com] and [http://www.cnn.com]
[40] Musthafa 2002.
[41] Zada 2002a.
[42] *Media Indonesia,* 2002-09-25; cf. *Kompas,* 2002-09-28, and virtually all other Indonesian newspapers and magazines around these dates.
[43] Hefner 2002a.

ment of the Maluku violence and the rise of radical Islamic organizations in the country, Indonesians themselves have also begun to doubt the peaceful and tolerant nature of their Islam. Indeed, many Javanese Muslims have shamefully commented upon this development, which in the words of one elderly acquaintance constitutes nothing but an "insult towards both Islam and Javanese culture" (I. *penghinaan terhadap agama Islam dan kebudayaan Jawa*).

Nevertheless, in the minds of both scholars and their subjects, Indonesian Islam is generally thought of as tolerant and peaceful, and, indeed, the sociological reality is rather quick to support—though not unreservedly—such views. However, and this is of importance, there are no reasons to think of Indonesian society as un-Islamic due to this tolerant and peaceful character of religion and society. It is an all too common disbelief in the West that 'Islam' has to be more or less radical to be genuine.

THE ISLAMIC RESURGENCE

Now we will allow ourselves to make a substantial historical step forward,[44] namely to the last couple of decades, and more precisely the Islamic resurgence they have given expression to. A few words on the intermittent period are, however, justifiable and indeed needed. As argued above, Islam in the early days in the archipelago was largely, though not exclusively, influenced by Sufism. It has often been argued that it was the mystical character of Islam that attracted the Javanese to this "new religion" during this era, and that observation is probably quite accurate. It was not always an 'orthodox' Sufism that was practiced by the Javanese, however, and it is rather safe to conclude that the orthodox currents were not as strong initially as they later came to be. In general and very broad terms we may thus agree with Federspiel in that he asserts that,

> ... over the past four hundred years Muslims in the region have slowly altered their perceptions of Islam, since the heterodox religious trends of the early period have slowed in momentum, and more standard Sunnī Islamic practices and patterns have slowly gained in importance. [...] ...in the early part of the twentieth century [Indonesian Islam then experienced] a wave of reformist thinking, which had a heavy impact in redefining Muslim belief and behavior toward widely recognized Sunnī beliefs, practices and behavior. [...] This deepening of belief and strengthening of behavior was not, until recently, at all rapid nor did it affect all parts of the population with an even impact.[45]

[44] Readers interested in the history of Islam in Indonesia are referred to the works of Benda 1958, Noer 1973, Ricklefs 1993, Saleh 2001 (esp. pp. 17-45) and their relevant references.
[45] Federspiel 2001: 5f.

The last four hundred years may then be regarded as a slow—but increasingly fast—and steady voyage towards Islamic orthodoxy or orthopraxy.[46] Exactly what turns this process has taken will never become perfectly clear due to the scarcity of material. Case studies may, of course, throw some light on the situation, but this is not the place for such an endeavor. Instead, we will directly proceed to the recent Islamic resurgence. This resurgence—which has had a global impact on Muslim and non-Muslim societies alike—has aptly been the subject of much scholarly attention, and has been depicted as one of the most important developments of the twentieth century.[47] It is my conviction that in our attempts to grasp the nature of the religious/Islamic landscape in contemporary Indonesia we will benefit from a discussion of this phenomena.

Terminological considerations

Though often popularly thought of as having its roots in the environment of the Iranian revolution—or at its best in the works of men such as Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī and Muḥammad ᶜAbduh, and the Islamic modernism they represent—the Islamic resurgence which commenced in the late twentieth century actually constitutes a continuation of a long Islamic tradition.[48] Pivotal to our understanding of it, we find two pairs of concepts that call for elaboration: namely, that of *iṣlāḥ-tajdīd* and that of *ijtihād-taqlīd*. The first pair can be translated as 'revival' and 'reform' respectively, but a further investigation of these words will unveil more subtle nuances and dimensions that are of importance to us. As most Arabic words, *iṣlāḥ* stems from a root consisting of three consonants, in this case *ṣ-l-ḥ*, the meaning of which is "to be good, right, righteous, pious."[49] Derived from this root is then, amongst other words, *iṣlāḥ*, bearing the meaning "reform, restoration of order, remedying."[50] Thus, the meaning of *iṣlāḥ* is not just ordinary reform, but rather reform guided by an Islamic moral righteousness, and as such the work of the reformers, the *muṣliḥūn*, is related to the work of God's messengers.[51] As a consequence, the *muṣliḥūn* are praised in the Koran.[52] *Iṣlāḥ* as a concept is thus not bound to any specific era, but is rather a recurring theme throughout Islamic history. The most well-known era of *iṣlāḥ* is, indeed, probably that of

[46] Interestingly, the major part ot these four centuries also experienced Dutch influence.
[47] Esposito & Voll 1996: 3.
[48] Voll 1983.
[49] Wehr 1961: 521. Many Arabic words contain a wide range of meanings and offer multiple interpretations; presented in the text is only a selection of them.
[50] Wehr 1961: 522f.
[51] Voll 1983: 33.
[52] For example QS 7:170 ("For [We shall requite] all those who hold fast to the divine writ and are constant in prayer: verily, We shall not fail to requite those who enjoy the doing of what is right" (*al-muṣliḥīn*)). Cf. QS 28:19. For the usage of other derivations of *ṣ-l-h* in the Koran, see Merad 1978: 141.

al-Afghānī and ᶜAbduh, but it has been argued that the first movements of *iṣlāḥ* appeared very early in Islamic history.[53]

Tajdīd, often translated as 'renewal,' is derived from the root *j-d-d*, meaning "to be new, to appear for the first time, to strive earnestly."[54] We thus see that *tajdīd* too has a moral dimension attached to its basic meaning. In a well-known *ḥadīth*, the prophet is reported to have said that at the beginning of each century, God will send someone (a *mujaddid*) who will renew the Islamic faith and its practices.[55] In other words, the practice of renewal of the Islamic faith is divinely sanctioned, and it may even as a result be regarded as a religious obligation. The concept of *tajdīd* is closely connected to that of *iṣlāḥ*, and the in Islamic history recurring *tajdīd-iṣlāḥ* tradition should first and foremost be understood as a movement trying to interpret and implement the faith and practices of Islam in relation to the specific *mujaddid*'s viewpoints in the context of his time.

Voll has argued that there are three recurring themes in the Islamic tradition of reform and revival: (1) a return to, or a strict application of, the Koran and the *sunnah* of the prophet, (2) an emphasis on independent analysis (*ijtihād*), and (3) a reaffirmation of the uniqueness of the Koranic message.[56] There are, however, reason to approach and understand these themes in a broad sense and realize that new interpretations of the tradition very well may be in the making (as Voll also is careful to note). Merad offers another, wider definition of *iṣlāḥ* in that he argues that it contains a two-folded approach, namely (1) to define Islam solely in relation to its authentic sources (i.e., the Koran and the prophet's *sunnah*), and then (2) to work towards the realization of a society in which Muslims could conform to the ideals and values of their religion. *Iṣlāḥ* then can be conceptualized as a response to the Koranic injunction of 'commanding what is good and prohibiting what is evil.'[57]

The other pair of terms suggested for discussion above is that of *ijtihād-taqlīd*. *Ijtihād*, derived from the root *j-h-d* meaning "to endeavor, take pains, exhaust,"[58] is variously translated as "exertion, effort"[59] "independent judgement,"[60] "new interpretations,"[61] and "the legal practice whereby a jurist

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[53] Merad 1978: 142. See also Voll 1983: 36; Enayat (1982: 4-10) mentions Shī'īsm, the Khawārij, the Muᶜtazilah, and al-Ikhwān al-Safāᵓ as early representations of schisms in the Muslim community.

[54] Wehr 1961: 113-114.

[55] Quted in Jansen 2000: 61 (with reference to the *ḥadīth* collection of Abū Dāwūd) and Voll 1983: 33 (without reference).

[56] Voll 1983. The translation of *ijtihād* as 'independent analysis' is Voll's. Cf. the discussion below.

[57] Merad 1978: 141. For the injunction of *al-amr bī l-maᶜrūf wa n-nahy ᶜani l-munkar*, see QS 3:104, 3:110.

[58] Wehr 1961: 142. It is noteworthy that this is also the root of *jihād*.

[59] See for example Waines 1995: 65, Coulson 1964: 59, Glasse 1989: 182, Enayat 1982: 217 (with the addition "to deduce rules from sources).

[60] Eickelman & Piscatori 1996: 26.

[61] Hedin *et al.* 1999: 6.

applies his independent effort to deduce unavailable laws from the sources."[62] At first, the term was used in the context of Islamic law for the practice of individual reasoning generally, but soon it was understood in a narrower sense and became the technical term for the method of reasoning by analogy (A. *qiyās*). The method of *ijtihād* was an uncontroversial practice in early Islamic history, and it was not until after the formative period of Islamic law that the concept was called into question, then abandoned around the beginning of the tenth century—something that has been referred to as the 'closing of the door of *ijtihād*' in works on Islamic history.[63] In other words, when the four legal schools (A. *madhhab,* pl. *madhāhib)* were firmly established, any further (re)interpretations were regarded as legal tautologies. It was this door of *ijtihād* that received great attention from the nineteenth century Muslim modernists in their efforts to re-open it. But the door was not totally closed for a whole millenium; Islamic history has given place to individuals who, from time to time, have returned to the initial meaning of *ijtihād* and asserted their perceived rights to make use of this methodology in their search of the Truth.[64]

The proposed antithesis of *ijtihād* is *taqlīd*, derived from the root *q-l-d*, and often translated as "blind/slavish imitation."[65] More specifically, the term is employed in relation to "the reliance upon the decisions and precedents set in the past,"[66] and as such, the users of this practice, the *muqallid*, are those who guaranteed that the "door to *ijtihād*" remained closed. Calder has shown that the general negative understanding of *taqlīd* as "unreasonable and thoughtless acceptance of authority" is not in total congruity with historical facts, and that a distinction between absolute *ijtihād* (A. *ijtihād mutlaq*) and *ijtihād* within the legal schools (A. *ijtihād fī l-madhhab*) would give rise to a distinction between 'willingly submission' and 'blind submission' in relation to *taqlīd*.[67] Nevertheless, most Muslims (and non-Muslim scholars) seem to understand *taqlīd* as the (more or less) blind acceptance or imitation of the great *ʿulamāʾ* of the past.

The most recent outcome of the continuous Islamic tradition of *iṣlāḥ-tajdīd*—to which the concepts of *ijtihād* and *taqlīd* are connected—is what is usually referred to as the Islamic resurgence. Its outcome has been of a wide variety of forms, all of which have been given often contradicting labels. The

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[62] Rahnema 1994: 7-8.
[63] Schacht 1971a: 1026.
[64] Macdonald 1971: 1027. Macdonald mentions, amongst others, Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328) and Ibn Rushd (d. 1198).
[65] See Waines 1995: 206, 232, Coulson 1964: 80, Hourani 1962: 127, 150, 235, 272, Enayat 1982: 224, and Haddad 1994: 36. The literal meaning of *qalada* is "to adorn with a necklace" (Wehr 1961: 786). It referred to a now extinct practice of hanging a necklace around an animal to be sacrificed, in order to assure that the animal remained ritually pure. It also referred to the practice of hanging a badge or chain around persons appointed to public duties, wherefrom the meanings 'public acceptance' and 'tradition' stems. See Glasse 1989: 397.
[66] Glasse 1989: 397.
[67] Calder 2000: 137-138.

most contested term employed in this regard is perhaps that of 'fundamentalism,' which at times is thought to represent the whole scope of Islamic thought and action since the 1970s. Although it has its roots in the context of early twentieth century Protestantism in North America,[68] this term has been utilized in such uncritical ways, first and foremost by mass media, that the Western general reader is more likely to associate it with a heavily bearded Iranian *mullāh* screaming *Allāhu akbar*, than with its proper origin. It has been correctly observed that the term "tells us everything and yet, at the same time, nothing."[69] Nevertheless, it is still utilized in academic works,[70] and journalism has invented it with even more terrorizing qualities after the terror attacks in September 2001 than before. The term 'fundamentalism' will not be employed in the present work,[71] a decision based on Esposito's arguments[72] and the insights of Westerlund in that he says that it is an imprecise and misleading concept that is "pejorative or accusatory rather than descriptive."[73] Furthermore, I argue that it is misleading, as is often done, to connect the contemporary Islamic resurgence only with those individuals and movements falling under this proposed label of fundamentalism. Instead, we must realize that the Islamic resurgence has exercised profound influence on almost all different orientations within the Islamic intellectual spectra, and that it is counter productive to comprehend it in the narrowest of senses. Thus, this recent Islamic resurgence has affected Islamic modernists and traditionalists alike, and it has given rise to numerous 'new' trends within the Islamic tradition, one of which many scholars refer to with the more neutral umbrella term 'Islamism.'[74] There is among scholars a tendency to put a disproportionately immense emphasis on the political dimensions of this phenomenon,[75] which is deluding in that it overshadows other aspects.[76] Our some-

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[68] Marsden 1980: 119.

[69] Esposito 1995: 7. Abootalebi (1999: 14) has also noted the "confusion" over the term 'fundamentalist.'

[70] See for example Tibi 1998, Enayat 1982, and Dekmejian 1995. *The Fundamentalism Project* at the University of Chicago also made usage of the term; see Marty & Appleby 1991, 1993a, 1993b, 1994, and 1995.

[71] Except, of course, in direct quotations and the like.

[72] Esposito 1995: 7-8.

[73] Westerlund 1997: 309, note 1; see also Hedin *et al.* 1999: 20. On similar grounds, terms such as 'extremism' and 'fanaticism' will be omitted in the text. 'Literalism' is another term I have found insufficient to denote the orientation of certain contemporary Islamic movements, in that every Muslim at one point or another in her life goes back to the literal origin of her religion, that is the Koran and the Prophet's example (*sunnah*) as recorded in *aḥādīth*. As a result of the centrality of the Koran in the Islamic tradition, all Muslims could perhaps be denoted as "literalists" then.

[74] See for example Sayyid 1997: 11, 17, Evers-Rosander 1997: 4, Westerlund 1997: 309.

[75] Sayyid for example states that Islamists are people "who see in Islam their political future," and goes on to state that "Islamism is a discourse that attempts to center Islam within the political order" (1997: 17). It is, indeed, a common practice to equate Islamism with political aspirations, and it has thus been said that Islamists strive to establish "states based on Islamic law" (Evers-Rosander 1997: 4). This might be true for some aspects of the Islamist project, but it

what disturbed understanding of this Islamism as a solely political enterprise is probably due to the disproportionate scholarly attention given to the relationship between Islamism and politics, and the lack of interest in analyzing social and cultural Islamist aspirations. Abdurrahman Wahid, former president of Indonesia and chairman of the world's largest Muslim organization, has argued that the Islamic resurgence in Southeast Asia has been cultural rather than political,[77] and some scholars have noted the Sufi side of the revival.[78] The primary identification markers of the 'fundamentalist' or 'Islamist' outcome of the resurgence are their members' strive to further Islamize all aspects of contemporary society, and their opposition to secularization, Western dominance, democracy and the privatization of religion. In contemporary Indonesia, frequent usage is made of the term *Islam radikal*, or 'radical Islam.' The English translation seems much harsher than the original Indonesian, but we have reasons to make usage of it in the context of the present discussion.[79] Zada has argued that the term *Islam radikal* is appropriate in the Indonesian context, due to the fact that many Islamic groups make usage of it in referring to themselves, and also due to the fact that (non-radical) Muslim intellectuals such as Azyumardi Azra and Ahmad Syafi'i Ma'arif use it too. In addition, it is also a suitable opposite to the form of Islam called liberal.[80]

And indeed, at the other end of the spectrum of the contemporary Islamic resurgence, we find more liberal interpretations of Islam (see also the discussion of the actors below). It was Charles Kurzman who popularized the term 'liberal Islam' at the end of the twentieth century,[81] and in doing that he followed the Indian legal scholar Asaf Ali Asghar Fyzee (d. 1981), who probably was the first Muslim intellectual to make use of it.[82] Kurzman discerns six concerns of liberal Islam, namely "opposition to theocracy, support for democracy, guarantees of the rights of women and non-Muslims in Islamic countries, defense of freedom of thought, and belief in the potential for human progress."[83] Liberal Islam—with its apparent low media value—has not received as much scholarly or popular journalistic attention as has other Islamic discourses, and is thus not very well known. The form this movement or trend assumes in different cultural contexts may vary slightly, and this will

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is deluding to let the political aspects of Islamism overshadow the other dimensions of the phenomenon.

[76] Westerlund 1997: 309; see also Esposito & Voll 1996: 16.

[77] Esposito & Voll 2001: 210. Cf. Hefner 1997a: 7.

[78] Howell *et al.* 1998, Howell 2001, Riddell 2002b: 66.

[79] In Indonesian, by the way, the term 'Islamic fundamentalism' too has been softened in the form of *Isfun* (short for *Islam fundamentalis*).

[80] Zada 2002b: 17f. Note that my usage of the term 'radical' throughout this thesis refers to the Indonesian *radikal* and not to Islamic radicalism in other parts of the world, or even to other discussions of Islam in non-Indonesian contexts (see also below).

[81] Kurzman 1998a.

[82] Kurzman 1998b: 4. See also Binder 1988.

[83] Kurzman 1998b: 4. See also below.

be discussed below; suffice it here to state that contemporary liberal Islam, too, is an outcome of the world-wide Islamic resurgence.

The Indonesian experience

Theories and theoreticians of modernization have almost exclusively presupposed that secularization either prepares the way to modernity, or inevitably comes in its aftermath. The recent global religious resurgence has, however, questioned the legitimacy of these theories.[84] In the words of a well-known scholar of Indonesian Islam, "[t]here is no reason to expect that modernization necessarily produces secular, liberal, democratic capitalist societies."[85] Indeed, in contemporary Indonesia there is a strong link between religion and modernity, and Islam is not rarely understood as the very essence of this modernity. Furthermore, the supposition that Islam and modernity do not constitute two irreconcilable entities finds support throughout Indonesian society, and arguably becomes increasingly visible.

The presence of an Islamic revival in Indonesia since the late 1970s has been noted by numerous scholars.[86] This "unprecedented Islamic resurgence"[87] seems to be instigated by factors similar to those active in the global resurgence, with which it also shares common goals. Esposito has discerned three causative phenomena thought to be common to the contemporary Muslim experience, namely:

> 1) an identity crisis precipitated by a sense of utter impotence, disillusionment, and loss of self-esteem; 2) disillusionment with the West and the failure of many governments to respond adequately to the political and socio-economic needs of their societies; and 3) the new-found sense of pride and power which resulted from military (Arab-Israeli war) and economic (oil embargo) success in 1973.[88]

However, as Esposito also points out, "the causes of the resurgence are many and need to be appreciated within the specific contexts of individual coun-

[84] Hefner 1997a: 18, 21. Cf. Woodward 2002: 112, Mujani 2003: 124.
[85] Woodward 2002: 123. Cf. *ibid.*: 140.
[86] E.g., Azra 1999, 2002b, van Dijk 1998, 2002, Evers & Siddique 1993, Federspiel 1998, Haq 1987, Hefner 1987, 1997a, 1997b, Howell 2001, Keeler 1998, Liddle 1996a, Mehden, 1986, Mehden 1993, Muzaffar 1987, Riddell 2002b, Schwarz 1994, Thomas 1988. Azra is careful to note that it is pre-mature to speak of a resurgence (I. *kebangkitan*) in respect to Southeast Asian Islam, and instead suggests that it should be regarded as an "escalation (I. *peningkatan*) of Southeast Asian Muslims' enthusiasm or *attachment* [italics and English in original] towards Islam" (1999: xvii). Later, he has stated that there is "some kind of 'Islamic resurgence' [going on] in Indonesia" (2002b: 33), but he is generally inclined to use the term 'santrinization' (from I. *santri*; see below) to characterize recent developments in Indonesian and Southeast Asian Islam.
[87] Hefner 1997a: 5.
[88] Esposito 1983: 11. Cf. Esposito 1995: 11-29.

tries and regions."[89] A decade earlier, Bakker had already argued that the Islamic resurgence in Indonesia holds some common characteristics with its worldwide equivalent, but that it also has some local features.[90]

In Indonesia, as elsewhere, this Islamic resurgence has affected both the political and the socio-cultural spheres. As for the first of these, mention must be made of the rapprochement between former President Soeharto and various Muslim groups that took place in the 1980s, after years of mutual hostility, disrespect and suspicion.[91] This process of reconciliation culminated in late 1990 with the establishment of ICMI (I. *Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim se-Indonesia*), or the Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals.[92] Not only was this new organization sanctioned by the President, it was also—literally—inaugurated to the sound of his drum-beating. And from it emerged within short the country's first Islamic bank, the *Bank Muamalat Indonesia*, and a by now highly respected national daily, the *Republika*. In 1990, the government—apart from continuing its support for mosque building and the like—also re-allowed schoolgirls to wear *jilbab* (I., A. *ḥijāb*, veil), and the subsequent year, Soeharto performed a medially well-covered pilgrimage to Mecca and took the name Haji Muhammad Soeharto.[93] Already in 1978, the government banned proselytizing activities among people already belonging to one of the five state-acknowledged religions,[94] and also banned the practice of giving gifts of various kinds to prospective converts,[95] which was seen as accommodating Muslim interest. The practice of gift-giving to prospective converts has not, however, vanished totally from Java—at least not according

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[89] Esposito 1983: 11. This is not, however, the place to engage in that discussion—interested readers are referred to Hefner 1997a, Horvatich 1994, Muzaffar 1987, Evers & Siddique 1993, and their relevant references.

[90] Bakker 1972: 126.

[91] For a recent and comprehensive discussion of the relationship between the Soeharto regime and Islam, see Zada's chapter on "Islamic Politics in the New Order," (2002b: 29-57).

[92] For pre-1990 rapprochement, see Hefner 1997b: 86ff. For a discussion of ICMI, see Hefner 1993, 1997b, 2000 (esp. chap. 6, pp. 128-166), Ramage 1995 (esp. chap. 3, pp. 75-121), Schwarz 1994: 176-193, and also ICMIs web site at [http://www.icmi.or.id]. Here it is stated that the birth of ICMI was not just a historical coincidence, but rather an outcome of global and regional developments. Referred to here are the global Islamic resurgence, and the (regional) rapprochement between Soeharto and Muslim organizations in the second half of his rule (see ICMIa).

[93] Hefner 1997b: 111. Hefner also notes the reinforcement of religious education (in 1988), the strengthening of Islamic courts (in 1989), and the imprisoning of "slandering" journalists (between 1990-1993) as evidence of the increasingly Islamic character of the government at this time (*ibid.*). It is interesting to note that in the year preceding the establishment of the BMI, the traditionalist Muslim organization *Nahdlatul Ulama* (thorugh the efforts of Abdurrahman Wahid) had initiated co-operation with Bank Summa, a private bank owned by the Christian, and ethnically Chinese, Soeryadjaya family (Schwarz 1995: 188). The *Bank Muamalat Indonesia* holds as its slogan the words *pertama sesuai Syariah*, or "the first [bank in Indonesia] in accordance with the *sharīᶜah*." At the time of writing (late 2002), there are advanced plans of introducing Islamic assurance in Indonesia (see *Suara Merdeka* 2002-11-11, *Republika* 2002-11-21).

[94] E.g., Islam, Christianity (Protestantism and Catholicism), Hinduism and Buddhism.

[95] Chandra 1998: 197.

to numerous reports from friends and acquintances. These were instead quick to note the allegedly common practice of Christian missionaries to give rice and other staple foods together with medicines to poor Muslims, in exchange of the latter coming to church the following Sunday.[96] There is also a popular saying among Javanese Muslims that holds that it is hungry people who convert to Christianity, whereas the enlightened and clear-sighted accept Islam.

Since the (forced) resignation of HM Soeharto in May 1998, the relations between the government and the Islamic community—at least the more moderate parts of it—have become even more harmonious. The first chairman of ICMI, B.J. Habibie, was inaugurated as the country's third president immediately after Soeharto's withdrawal, and he was in October 1999 (rather) democratically replaced by the charismatic and popular Nahdlatul Ulama (a Muslims traditionalist organization; see below) leader Abdurrahman Wahid. By that time, Indonesia had finally got its first real *santri* President.[97] However, his controversial style and statements in combination with the absence of hoped-for economic development soon attracted criticism, and in July 2001 he was eventually impeached and replaced by his vice president, Megawati Soekarnoputri—the daughter of the Indonesia's first president. In 1999, her candidacy to the presidency had been opposed by various Muslim groups and intellectuals—some of which at that time played critical roles in her political success—and it was probably the appointment of her vice president, Hamzah Haz, that secured relatively good relations between the government and Indonesia's Islamic organizations.

However important and interesting this political and public side of the Islamic resurgence may be, of even more interest to us here are the personal and 'religious' aspects of it. Hefner and other scholars have noted the rapid increase in the number of mosques in Java as one example and sign of the Islamic resurgence.[98] Although there is an obvious connection between mosque building and governmental funds, it must be acknowledged that there would be little use of building new mosques, were the already existent ones not crowded. And indeed, mosques in contemporary Java are often—at least once a week (Friday)—packed, and parts of the congregation is frequently seen performing the ritual prayer and listening to the *khutbah* (I., sermon, A. *khuṭbah*) outside the mosque proper under the blistering sun. (Overcrowded mosques during the supererogatory *tarāwīḥ* prayers during Ramadan will be discussed later.)

Other signs of the personal aspects of the Islamic resurgence in Indonesia can be seen from the stress laid on the so-called five pillars of Islam (I. *rukun Islam,* A. *arkānu l-islām*), and most visible of these is perhaps the

[96] Cf. Mujani 2003: 180f.
[97] Sukidi 1999.
[98] Hefner 1997b: 88. Drawing on figures from local Statistics Offices (*Kantor Statistik Propinsi Jawa Tengah* and *Kantor Statistik Propinsi Jawa Timur*), Hefner states, *inter alia*, that the number mosques in Central Java (which is a supposed stronghold of 'syncretism') almost doubled between 1980 and 1992 (from 15,685 to 28,743).

second pillar, namely that of ritual prayer (A. *ṣalāh,* I. *sholat*).[99] Keeler reported in 1998 that he was "impressed" with the numbers of persons excusing themselves for a moment to perform *sholat*, who a decade earlier not only had not executed this pillar, but also expressed their disdain for those who did.[100] My own findings in Yogyakarta and Blora confirm this development. Instructional pamphlets dealing with the correct performance of *sholat* are numerous and widely available in Java. I was once surprised not only by the entrepreneurship of a young Javanese who offered these small '*sholat* guides' for a couple of thousand *rupiah* on a bus in Central Java, but also by the fact that he sold a substantial number of them. *Sholat* has become a widely accepted and strongly emphasized ritual act in Java, and Javanese Muslims performing ritual prayer can be seen everywhere these days. Mosques or *musholla* which seem to cater almost exclusively to traveling Javanese have sprung up along heavily trafficked roads, and at train-, bus-, and petrol stations. Campus mosques are frequently visited—visiting them was during my time as student at *Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta* one of the few valid reasons for being late for class—, as are *musholla* in shopping malls, movie theatres, etc.[101] For many contemporary Javanese Muslims, it is not only morally reprehensible but also logically impossible to denote oneself as a Muslim without performing the daily ritual prayers, and reference is often made to the Koran, which says that man was created but to worship God.[102]

Another sign of the personal side of the Islamic resurgence is to be found in Muslim dress. Since the decision by the Soeharto regime in the early 1990s to lift the prohibition against veiling in Indonesian schools, Muslim girls and women have become increasingly attracted to the use of *jilbab*.[103] Brenner has written an entertaining article concerning the practice of veiling in Java, and amongst other things drawn attention to the relationship between this practice and ideas of modernity.[104] A majority of the female students at

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[99] The other pillars will not be discussed here. As for *zakāh* (A. almsgiving), we can, however, shortly note that its importance to Indonesian and Javanese Muslims is becoming increasingly central. Several serious organizations with the aim of collecting and distributing *zakāh* can be found in contemporary Indonesia, and that the problem of *zakāh* is of central concern to the Muslim community can be seen from the many books, articles, interviews, interactive TV-shows, etc., discussing the topic. The fourth Muslim pillar—that of fasting in Ramadan—will be discussed elsewhere. And concerning the last, namely pilgrimage to Mecca, suffice it here to say that the prolonged economic crisis (begun in 1997) has not largely affected the Indonesian numbers of pilgrims leaving for Saudi Arabia—the quota is still filled. (Taking into consideration that the pilgrimage from Indonesia costs some USD 3,000 for each of the 200,000 pilgrims, this is rather remarkable.)

[100] Keeler 1998.

[101] A *musholla* (I. A. *muṣallan*) differs from a *masjid* (I. A., mosque) in that the former is simply a place for individual prayers, whereas in a *masjid*, prayer is held in congregation. Further, there is no Friday service (I. *sholat jum'at*, A. *ṣalātu l-Jumaᶜāt*) in a *musholla*.

[102] QS 51:56.

[103] "Veiling" should here be understood in a rather broad sense, as has been suggested by Brenner 1996: 691, n. 1.

[104] Brenner 1996: 673, *idem.*

my former campus in Indonesia were veiled, and when asked about this practice they invariably stated that it is *wajib* (I., obligatory, A. *wājib*) for Muslim females to veil, and that it constitutes one of the liberating principles that Islam holds in its being for women. Not few of these students had begun to use the veil in connection with the commencement of their university studies (thus signifying a new, 'modern' phase of their lives), and some acknowledged that their parents, living out of town, did not know of this new habit of theirs. It is not only young women who are attracted to veiling, however. One of my neighbors in Yogyakarta, Bu Yanto—a middle-aged woman—, repeatedly expressed her wish (in front of me and her husband) to begin to use the veil over an extended period of time, but did not get her husband's approval. Not because he did not approve of the practice of veiling—he was himself a pious and practicing Muslim—but because he wanted to make sure his wife should not do anything in a haste that she would later regret. ("Once on," Pak Yanto argued, "the veil must stay on.")[105] A few months before me leaving Yogyakarta at the occasion of a social ritual connected to fasting (*syawalan*; see chapter five), Bu Yanto arrived (late) fully veiled. She was clearly very satisfied with her new identity, as was her 15-year old daughter, also having sided with her mother in taking on the veil. Needless to say, Pak Yanto was astoundingly proud. As will be seen later, Muslim dress—for both men and women—becomes increasingly popular during Ramadan, when veils (I. *jilbab,* A. *ḥijāb*), sarongs (I. *sarung*), fez-like caps (I. *peci*), a kind of Muslim shirt for men (I. *baju koko*), newly knit praying rugs (I. *sajadah*, A. *sajjādah*), and copies of the Koran, sell very well. Indeed, a visit to one of the stores specializing in Muslim dress and paraphernalia during the last few days of this month can be a very trying experience.

The use of the Islamic greeting, *as-salāmu ᶜalaykum wa raḥmatu llāhi wa barakātuh* (A.), and its answer, *wa ᶜalaykum salām wa raḥmatu llāhi wa barakātuh* (A.),[106] constitutes yet another sign of the personal side of the Islamic resurgence. This greeting is becoming increasingly popular in Java, and one can hear it in situations ranging from official presidential speeches to encounters between two friends on the street. (Occasionally even non-Muslims in Indonesia make use of it!) But this greeting is not reserved for humans, and is indeed also extended towards 'the unseen' (A. *al-ghaib*, I. *mahkluk halus*) inhabitants of our world. Thus, when entering an empty—in

[105] This is a very common line of argumentation concerning the commencement of veiling in Java, and it is common that young women prior to adapting the veil express their anxiety due to the fact that they regard veiling as an irrevocable act. In the words of one informant, it would be morally more repugnant to take on the veil and then decide to take it off again, than not wearing it in the first place. Not all, however, are so strict in their veiling, and may thus become subjects of criticism; I once overheard a student getting scolded by her lecturer in Arabic at campus due to her 'not admirable' (I. *tidak terpuji*) habit of using the veil one day, and not using it the other.

[106] The meaning of which is "May peace be upon you, and God's grace and His Blessings" and "And upon you (too) peace, and God's grace and His blessings" respectively. Cf. QS 4:86, 6:54, and 24:61. In Indonesian, the greeting and its answer are written as *Assalamu'alaikum wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuh*, and *wa 'alaikum salam wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuh.*

the sense there being no humans—house, or passing by a deserted graveyard, this formula is also preferably pronounced. When passing by a large tree or some other spiritual potent object, Javanese are also often heard pronouncing the *salam* (as the greeting is referred to in Indonesia). An entertaining example of creative *ijtihād* is constituted by the fact that this latter practice, some people argue, nowadays can be replaced by honking the bell on one's car or motorcycle (!). Stickers on the front door asking the guest to state the *salam* are common,[107] as are door bells announcing the greeting, thus giving a hint to the visitor that this is a house where the Islamic *salam* is expected. The Javanese and Indonesian customary greetings to be pronounced when approaching a house (*kula nuwun* and *permisi* respectively) are still widely used, especially by elders and villagers, but it seems as if the *salam* is gaining ground on its behalf.

The Islamic resurgence in Indonesia is also reflected in the availability of Islamic books. Upon entering a bookstore in any Javanese city, one is stunned with the amount of books discussing religious—mostly Islamic—topics. One finds numerous books on any one topic that might attract one's attention: Islamic history, philosophy, theology, politics and so forth. Although the majority is written by Indonesian scholars, there is also a substantial part of translated (mostly from Arabic) works, thus ensuring an internationalization of Indonesian Islam. Among the translations, works of men of such various orientations as Khomeinī, Mawdūdī, al-ᶜArabī and al-Ghazālī are common, as are the works of some Western scholars, including Geertz, Hefner and Woodward. Works of Muslim scholars writing in European languages, such as Muhammad Arkoun and Fazlur Rahman, are also available in translation.

More examples of the Islamic resurgence in Java could have been mentioned—including alcohol availability, the presence of Islamic fashion and music, the great number of persons performing the *ḥajj* (A. pilgrimage, I. *hajj*) every year, etc.—but I believe the point has been made: Javanese society has been further Islamized during the last decades due to the global Islamic resurgence. And this Islamization has not only affected urban areas, as is often thought, but rural areas of Java too has not only been influenced by the resurgence, but also taken active part in it.[108]

[107] These stickers are usually bilingual, in that they use Indonesian at the beginning (*ucapkan*) and end (*sebelum masuk ruangan*), and Arabic (*as-salām ᶜalaykum...*; with Arabic script) in-between.

[108] See for example Hefner 1987: 548, Hefner 1997b: 90, and the contributions in the volume edited by Hefner and Horvatich (1997).

THE CONTEMPORARY ISLAMIC LANDSCAPE: ACTORS

This section aims at introducing the reader to the contemporary Islamic landscape in Java, and will thus present a number of 'actors.' Reflecting upon the fact that there are perhaps around one hundred million Muslims in Java alone, we quickly understand that what I argue below is a reduction of the social reality to a handful of suitable analytical categories. I am aware of the problems which may follow in this reduction's aftermath, but finding myself without any way of coming around it, I still choose to stick to this approach. I further believe that although being largely academic constructions, generalizations and artifices, these categories can be motivated. Their advantages include, of course, the possibility for us to begin to grasp the Javanese Islamic landscape—that is, to comprehend its multi polar character. Islam is not a monolithic tradition, and we are compelled to talk about 'Islams' in a plural sense,[109] and regard complex societies as an "organization of diversity."[110] These imperatives are not just academic constructions (which they may look like at first sight), but rather contemporary ways of expressing a well-known *ḥadīth*. In this tradition, Muhammad is reported to have anticipated the splintering of the Muslim *ʿummah* into 73 different groups after his death, and that only one of these would be on the straight path. (In Indonesia, this tradition is commonly brought forward by radicals—and at times modernists—whereas Muslims with a traditionalist inclination only rarely mention it. As for the neo-liberals this tradition holds little validity as they are prone to acknowledge multiple ways (including non-Muslim) to salvation.) Hence, the contemporary Muslim diversity finds support in a prophetic statement.

In a survey on the various actors or groups in contemporary society, it is easy to become too focused on their inner differences, and thus to neglect their similarities. This would be unfortunate. Virtually all Muslims, regardless of orientation, share some common basics, including principles of faith, ritual procedures, and notions of history. I was occasionally rebuked by my friends in Java when, in their opinion, I laid too much stress on the diversity and inner conflicts among various Muslim groups in Indonesia. By doing this, they argued, I would easily miss the point. "We all believe in God and in the prophet-ness (I. *kerasulan*) of Muhammad, we perform the prayers and fast during Ramadan, and we are all convinced of the existence of an afterlife (I. *akhirat*) in which we will be judged according to our deeds in this world," as a student friend once remarked. Indeed, on the one hand it is a common standpoint in Java that minor differences among the various actors should be

[109] al-Azmeh 1993: 1.
[110] Hannerz 1992: 14, as quoted in Hefner 2002b.

repressed in the interest of the welfare of the larger community. This fits well with the Javanese constant search for the social and psychological states of *slamet* (J., tranquility) and *rukun* (J., harmony). On the other hand, we see that these small issues often are magnified and capable of creating lasting tensions in the community. Speaking of modernists and traditionalists in rural Java, Cederroth has for example noticed that "much slandering" takes place.[111] Federspiel has similarly noted the "nasty overtones" in the polemics between the two groups.[112] The "extremely bitter" feuds between modernists and traditionalists have also been observed,[113] as has the "bitter mutual criticism" between them.[114] This is partly confirmed by my own experience. There was, for example, a traditional *ustadz* (I. religious teacher) in my *kampung* in Blora who told me that he was being continuously 'terrorized' (I. *diteror*) by his modernist neighbors. Their most serious debate revolved around their differences in opinions concerning the nightly supererogatory prayer during the month of fasting, which will be discussed in a subsequent chapter. However, it is my general impression that the relationship between Muslim modernists and traditionalists in Java is not at all as antagonistic as previous research has insisted.

Discussing different actors or groups in a Muslim society it is also easy to neglect these groups' areas of overlapping. Rather than being exclusive and watertight categories, an extensive overlapping occurs, and Javanese Muslims may at times simultaneously belong to two or more of the groups discussed below. It is possible for a Javanese to relate to certain aspects of his religion as a traditionalist, and to certain other aspects as a modernist. Consequently, it is possible to be a *hajj* that never misses his daily prayers, and at the same time a believer in the (supernatural) powers of *dukun* (I., traditional healer). To have a liking for gambling does likewise not necessarily mean that one does not fast during Ramadan, and usage of *jimat* (I., amulets, A. *ʿazīmah*) does not automatically rule out diligence in paying the *zakat* (I., religious tax, A. *zakāh*) every year. In the words of Leif Manger: "People can participate in many discourses without losing their coherence as persons and without seeing their communities as being disintegrated."[115]

There has been various approaches regarding the ways to describe the religious landscape of Java (and this will be further elaborated upon below in the discussion of previous research). Common to all—the present study included, perhaps—is the fact that there has been what Roff has denoted an "uncontrolled passion for taxonomy."[116] Indeed, there has been a passion for taxonomy in studies of Southeast Asian Islam: at times uncontrolled, but often necessary for the sake of clarity. The last point, which is not directly

[111] Cederroth 1995: 238.
[112] Federspiel 2001: 27.
[113] Woodward 2001: 33.
[114] Fuad 2002: 143.
[115] Manger 1999: 16.
[116] Roff 1985a: 8.

acknowledged by Roff, is of importance and relevance for the present discussion. The most well-known description of the Javanese religious landscape is the one proposed by Clifford Geertz in his now classical study, *The Religion of Java*.[117] Not surprisingly, this is the most criticized too. Geertz proposed a tripartite division of the Javanese religious landscape as he conceived it in the 1950s: the majority of the Javanese adhered to the Hindu-Buddhist-animist syncretic *abangan* 'variant' of religious life, whereas the more orthodox Muslims were called *santri*. The elite-bureaucracy Hindu-inclined Javanese were referred to as *priyayi*. Subsequent scholars have often built upon this division and created other, at times even more confusing, categories that need not be discussed here.[118] In stark contrast to Geertz, Mark Woodward discussed the religious life of Yogyakarta in terms of 'normative piety' and 'mysticism,'[119] and found that the *abangan-santri-priyayi* division was largely irrelevant for a correct understanding of Islam in Java. More recently, Woodward has proposed five "basic religious orientations" in Java, that is: indigenized Islams, traditionalism, modernism, Islamism and neo-Modernism,[120] whereas Peter Riddell has made usage of a similar four-folded typology including modernism, traditionalism, radical Islamism, and neo-Modernism.[121]

Initially, I was persuaded by the arguments of Woodward and Riddell and wrote a lengthy section on different 'actors' in Javanese Islam. In this section I included discussions of Sufism, traditionalist Islam, modernist Islam, radical Islam, and liberal/neo-modernist Islam. To this I then added short sections on the Department for Religious Affairs (I. *Departemen Agama*) and the Council for Indonesian Islamic Scholars (I. *Majelis Ulama Indonesia*). The idea was to give a rather comprehensive picture of Javanese Islam in this way.

When all this had been put in print and discussed at a postgraduate seminar in Lund, I had the opportunity to go back to Indonesia for verification of what I had written. I then learned that what I had argued did not correspond to the Javanese reality in any meaningful way. Forms of radical and liberal Islam are very much restricted to Jakarta and a few other urban centers, I found, and even there rather limited in scope. Mass media (and hence a few Western scholars?) are, however, very prone to highlight exactly these minority forms of Islam, and their high media exposition often results in the false impression of their substantial influence in the Indonesian or Javanese Muslim community. Among 'ordinary' Muslims, with whom this thesis pri-

[117] Geertz 1960. See also the discussion below.
[118] Occasionally, Javanese and other non-Javanese Indonesians discuss this division. Not long ago one could read in the country's largest newspaper, *Kompas*, about a well-known American scholar of Indonesian society, Robert Hefner, stating that the Geertzian polarization by this time was obsolescent (I. *sudah usang*). See *Kompas* August 23, 1999.
[119] Woodward 1989.
[120] Woodward 2001.
[121] Riddell 2002b.

marily is concerned, different forms of Islam are still largely limited to Islamic traditionalism and modernism, or more specifically to the organizations of *Nahdlatul Ulama* and *Muhammadiyah.* On top of this, a rather unconscious veil of Sufism frames large parts of the religious life in Java. Radicalism and liberalism/neo-modernism are of course heard of outside the major urban centers in the country—and small enclaves do exist—but are rarely understood or even paid much attention.

During the same stay in Indonesia I realized that the 'new' categories of Indonesian Islam—including radical and liberal forms of it—not are based on any *religious* foundations. Rather, these are the results of a *political* understanding of Islam. As such they are symptomatic of much scholarship directed towards Islam lately, which have been prone to regard Islam not as a religion in the first place but rather as a political potential. Political Islam is a valid, interesting, and needed area of study, but it may never be so at the expense of studies of Islamic religiosity or religious life.

Despite this, I have decided to include discussions of radical and liberal Islam in Indonesia in this chapter, and I also include short sections on the Department for Religious affairs and the Council for Indonesian Islamic Scholars. These sections are not 'valid' or relevant for the coming discussions of Ramadan in Yogyakarta and Blora, but may be interesting reading anyway for those paying attention to Indonesian Islam on a more general level. For those only interested in how Ramadan is lived in Java, it must, however, be read—if at all—as if there was a great parenthesis around it,

Note, finally, that the usage of terms such as 'modernism,' 'traditionalism,' and 'radicalism' refers to common usage in the Indonesian archipelago, and should not be confused with usage of the same terms in other contexts where they may bear different connotations.

SUFISM

I begin here with a discussion of Sufism, since, as discussed above, Sufism played a major—though not exclusive—role in the Islamization of Southeast Asia, as it did in other areas that experienced the geographical expansion of Islam. In fact, Islam in Indonesia was, broadly speaking, coterminous with Sufism prior to the twentieth century.[122] With the advance of Islamic modernism and later radicalism, however, Sufism came under pressure and was partly removed from the center of the Muslim discourse.[123] In Indonesian modernist language usage, Sufism was portrayed as *Islam yang bukan Islam*,

[122] Howell *et al.* 1998: 278. See van Bruinessen 1994a and Johns 1995 for a short histories of Sufism in Indonesia, and Shihab 2001 for an Indonesian recent assessment of Sufism in the country.

[123] See van Bruinessen 1999 for a discussion of the hardships of Sufism in twentieth century Indonesia.

"Islam that is not Islam,"[124] and this view came to be accepted by many Western scholars of religion and society in Java too. In their studies, it is apparent that they were themselves heavily influenced by the pleads of the modernists, and thus labeled much of Javanese religiosity as Hindu-Buddhist, or even animist. Later scholars have refined these presuppositions and convincingly argued for a reinterpretation of the religion of Java in the light of 'orthodox' Sufism. This is, however, a topic to be discussed below in the section on previous research; suffice it here to mention that much of that which was labeled non-Muslim in these early works probably was Sufi, and that Sufism indeed often has been misunderstood—by Muslim modernists and radicals, as well as by Western scholars and spiritual seekers.[125] Those are the reasons for discussing Islamic mysticism here.

Sufism has a long history within the Islamic tradition, and dates all the way back to the time of Muhammad. Indeed, Sufis themselves are inclined to regard the prophet as the first great Sufi *shaykh* (A., spiritual guide), and are quick to note their prophet's mystical propensity. Is it not true, for example, that he received his first revelation during a spiritual retreat involving different devotional techniques in the mountainous area outside Mecca? And who can deny the mystical quality of the—by Sufis oft-quoted—*ḥadīth* in which Muhammad is reported to have elaborated upon physical warfare as *al-jihādu l-saghīr* (A., the lesser struggle) and the struggle against one's own *nafs* (A., the lower self) as *al-jihādu l-akbar* (A., the greater struggle)? I argue that much of Sufism in contemporary Java has to be understood as part of orthodox Islam—as this is the understanding of most Sufis themselves—and thus not put in a position of opposition or contradiction to understandings of Islam that emphasize the outward, or exterior (A. *ẓāhir*, in contrast to *bāṭin*), aspects of religion. True, there has been 'heterodox Sufis,' but we must assume that they constitute a minority of the travelers on the Sufi path: al-Ḥallāj (Iran) and Seh Siti Jenar (Java) are exceptions and have thus attracted unproportionate amounts of academic interest. In fact, most Sufis are scrupulous observers of the *arkānu l-islām* (A., the five pillars of Islam), and a Sufi *shaykh* is generally also a teacher of exoteric Islam (A. *sharīᶜah*).[126] And this is not only a phenomenon of the post-Islamic resurgence world; Federspiel has argued that many of the Sufi Orders in the late nineteenth century also regarded many mystical practices in Java as heterodox,[127] and in this same line of guarding over the orthodoxy of Sufi faith and practices, the middle of the twentieth century also saw the establishment in Java of the *Jam'iyyat Ahl*

[124] Howell *et al.* 1998: 278. Howell *et al.* have argued elsewhere (2002: 53, n. 3) that the modernists in Indonesia were starker in their criticism of Sufism than many of their Middle Eastern equivalents. A discussion of Muḥammad ᶜAbduh as both Sufi and anti-Sufi can be found in Sirriyeh 1999: 86ff.

[125] Members of this latter category sometimes, strangely enough, even fail to acknowledge that Sufism is an aspect or part of Islam.

[126] Sedgwick 2000: 7, 30, 87, Woodward 1988: 60.

[127] Federspiel 2001: 73.

al-Thariqah Al-Mu'tabarah. This organization, established by NU Sufi *kyai*, had as its goal to defend what it perceived of as orthodox Sufism from the criticism of Islamic modernism. The very term *mu'tabar* means 'that which can be trusted,' i.e. orthodox.[128]

With the coming of modernism, then, the future of Sufism appeared gloomy, and it was repeatedly reported from Java that Sufism was something that at best attracted the rural elders.[129] That negative assessment of Sufism has, however, recently been the subject of revisions, and it has been shown that there has been renewed interest in Sufism among the Javanese during the last decades of the twentieth century. Moreover, membership in the Sufi Orders is no longer just a concern for elderly rural men; instead, there has been an influx of women, young people, urbanites, and highly educated persons to the *tarekat.* This 'Sufi revival' thus coincides with the general Islamic resurgence discussed above, and it can be concluded that in Java, "Islam need not be narrowly *syariah*-oriented to be 'modern.'"[130] In fact, Sufism may at times be appreciated as the essence of modernity. As for the Sufism of Java, we must also note that it is far from all Sufi-inclined Muslims who join a Sufi Order (I. *tarekat*, A. *ṭarīqah*, pl. *ṭuruq*) and actively take part in it.[131] Indeed, there are probably far more Javanese Muslims having a Sufi way of approaching, performing, and understanding their religion, than those seen in membership statistics. Hoffman observed among the Sufis of Egypt that not all of her subjects were familiar with the terms Sufism or *taṣawwuf*, [132] and this is as true for the Javanese. Some of my friends—apparently rather Sufi-inclined only rarely failing to recite *zikir* (A. *dhikr*) and *wirid* (A. *wird*) after ritual prayer, for example—could not at all relate to my questions on Sufism (or *tasawuf*). It seems that Sufism in its unorganized form (through Islamic traditionalism) has become so much part and parcel of Islam in Java that it has become virtually 'invisible' to many observers and practicing Muslims alike. (Self-conscious modernists and radicals are, however, often quick to criticize Sufis and their practices.) The largest dictionary over the Indonesian language, the *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia*, glosses *tasawuf* as "the teaching (method, etc.) of knowing and drawing closer to Allah."[133] This broad definition of Sufism kind of includes all (Javanese) Muslims.

In my discussion of Ramadan in subsequent chapters, I will not deal with the different *tarekat* (Sufi Orders) in Java—though that might have proved fruitful and worthwhile—, and will thus neither introduce these orders

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[128] van Bruinessen 1994b: [Akar Sosial NU: Pesantren dan Tarekat].
[129] E.g., Geertz 1960: 182ff, Muhaimin 1997: 6, Dhofier 1999: 140.
[130] Howell *et al.* 2002: 37. Cf. Howell *et al.* 1998 and van Bruinessen 1992. As for the Sufi side of the Islamic resurgence in Indonesia, see Howell 2001, and, for comparative purposes, see also Hoffman's monograph (1995) on the nature of Sufism in contemporary Egypt. This latter work draws a picture of Islamic mysticism that is all but on the verge to extinction.
[131] Howell *et al.* 1998: 280. Cf. Hoffman 1995: 358.
[132] Hoffman 1995: 19.
[133] *Ajaran (cara dsb) utk mengenal dan mendekatkan diri kpd Allah* (2nd ed., 1013).

here. I will instead focus on some aspects and techniques of unorganized Sufism.

The controversial *zikir* (I., recollection, A. *dhikr*) practices stand in focus in the life of Sufis. Derived from the Arabic *dhakara* ('to remember, to recollect, to keep in mind'), the Indonesian verb *berzikir* is explained in the *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* as "to recollect and repeatedly pronounce the name and glory of Allah."[134] In the Koran, Muslims are encouraged to "remember God (*dhukurū llāh*) with unceasing remembrance (*dhikran*),"[135] since God will remember those who remember Him,[136] and since remembrance is the greatest human action.[137] The *aḥādīth* literature is quick to support these Koranic injunctions, and it is, for example, stated that it was the habit of the Prophet to engage in loud *dhikr* sessions following ritual prayer.[138] In the Sufi Orders, the different *zikir* are only transmitted to the student at specific times, i.e., when the *shaykh* believes him to be ready for it, whereas simpler *zikir* outside the Orders are readily available to everyone. The performances of *zikir* in the Orders have often included various breath techniques, at times music and dancing, and occasionally ecstasy,[139] and it is primarily these that have made Sufism known to a larger non-Muslim audience. The most common and popular *zikir* I came upon in Java—and this is probably valid for virtually all Muslim areas—was the one consisting of the recitation (in Indonesianized Arabic) of *subhanallah, alhamdulillah,* and *Allahu akbar* thirty-three times respectively.[140] Other popular *zikir* include the *basmalah,* the *syahadat* and the ninety-nine beautiful names of God. Special for the latter, the devout but absent-minded can buy a *tasbih* (I., rosary, A. *misbaḥah*) with one of the names of God written on each bead.[141]

Another aspect of Sufism is its adherents' selfless love for (the loving) God, and their belief that it is possible to hold a personal relationship with Him. Trimingham thus defined a Sufi as "anyone that believes that it is possible to have direct experience of God and who is prepared to go out of his way to put himself in a state whereby he may be enabled to do this."[142] There are Koranic statements that support the Sufi comprehension of God as loving,

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[134] *Mengingat dan menyebut berulang-ulang nama dan keagungan Allah* (2nd ed., 1136).
[135] QS 33:41. Cf. QS 18:24.
[136] QS 2:152. "So remember Me (*fadhkurūnī*), and I shall remember you (*adhkurkum*); and be grateful unto Me, and deny Me not."
[137] QS 29:45. "... prayer restrains [man] from loathsome deeds and from all that runs counter to reason; and remembrance of God (*dhikr Allāh*) is indeed the greatest [good]."
[138] E.g., ḤB 1,12,802; ḤM 4,1211.
[139] See Trimingham [1971] 1998: 194ff and Hoffman 1995: 163ff.
[140] Corresponding to *subḥāna llāh* (glory be to God), *al-ḥamdu lillāh* (praise be to God), and *Allāhu akbar* (God is greater).
[141] Note finally that the *zikir* is part of a larger complex of recitations, namely that of *wirid* (I., A. *wird*, pl. *awrād*). The *wirid* thus includes *zikir* and various other formulae to be repeated, for example prayers of forgiveness and blessings on the Prophet and his family (see Hoffman 1995: 131).
[142] Trimingham [1971] 1998: 1.

near and dear to humankind: "God will in time bring forth people whom He loves and who love Him,"[143] and "Now verily, it is We who created man, and We know what his innermost self whispers within him: for We are closer to him than his neck-vein,"[144] to name just two. Some Javanese I spoke to expressed the relief and trust they experienced when they remembered or heard these, or similar, verses. It is in verses like these, one friend told me, that the essence of religion (I. *inti agama*) is to be found. Unfortunately, he continued, this simple fact often sinks into oblivion, and we think of God—if we think about Him at all—as detached from the everyday life of Muslims. It is apparently easy not only for non-Muslims, but for Muslims too, to perceive of God in the Islamic tradition as somewhat distant from the daily joys and sorrows of Muslims, only imposing craving rituals and preparing for the Day of Judgment. This picture is then partly revised by Sufism, and its loving appreciation of God that is closer to humans than their own jugular veins.

Finally, some words must be said about the Sufi practice of visiting tombs, shrines and graves (A. *ziyārah*, I. *ziarah*), a practice that has been the subject of much criticism from non-Sufis. Even reformist Sufis have at times banned the practice,[145] and it is perhaps wise to draw a distinction between the 'genuine Sufi' approach to this practice and the popular equivalent.[146] Such a 'genuine' understanding of *ziarah* is proposed in a contemporary Indonesian manual for pilgrimage, which says that the objective of pilgrimage is to

> ...pray [for the deceased] so that all his good deeds are accepted by Allah, the Exalted, and all the mistakes and sins he consciously or unconsciously performed while on Earth are forgiven by Him, in order to ensure his [the deceased's] place in His paradise.[147]

Apart from these benefits bestowed on the deceased, the pilgrim will also be effectively reminded of his own coming death and, consequently, the power of God (as proposed in an oft-recited *ḥadīth* of the prophet). There is thus a double *hikmah* (I., boon, A. *ḥikmah*) in pilgrimage. On the one hand, the pilgrim will not only receive merit (I. *pahala*, A. *falāḥ*, *ajr*) and become mindful of death by his visit, he will also be reminded of the importance of following the teachings of Islam and realize the significance of inter-Muslim relations (I. *tali silaturrahmi*). On the other hand, the deceased (I. 'people of the graves,' *ahli kubur*, A. *ahli l-qubūr*) will receive the 'present' of the pil-

[143] QS 5:54.
[144] QS 50:16.
[145] Trimingham [1971] 1998: 108.
[146] Trimingham [1971] 1998: 26. This distinction is applicable in other areas of Sufism—and other religious orientations—too.
[147] Labib 2000: 5. This is a rather free translation, due to the rigid and non-standard character of the Indonesian original: *...mendo'akan agar semua amal baiknya diterima disisi Allah Swt. sehingga mendapatkan Syurganya Allah Swt. dan diampuni segala kesalahan dan dosanya selama hidup di dunia, baik yang disengaja maupun yang tidak di sengaja.*

grims' readings—Koranic and other—, and feel cheered by the fact that all those readings are directed towards his well-being.[148] The idea of asking forgiveness and praying for a deceased has Koranic support: "O our Sustainer! Forgive us our sins, as well as those of our brethren who preceded us in faith."[149] At saints' tombs, Sufi approaches also involve the idea of intercession on behalf of the pilgrim by the deceased. In the eyes of many modernists and radicals, however, this practice comes close to—or is identical with—*syirk* (I., A. *shirk*, the grave sin of associating something or someone with God), since the believer does not put absolute trust in God. A general Sufi response to this criticism can be that "seeking the intercession of a righteous person does not imply worship of the intercessor."[150] It could also elucidate the case with reference to a tradition of Muhammad in which it is reported that the latter instructed a blind man to pray asking for the prophet's intercession in order to get his sight back.[151]

The reality shows, however, that 'popular Sufism' often involves other—and not so 'genuine'—practices than those mentioned above. I once discussed these, and other, topics with a Javanese Sufi of Arabic extraction (*Pak* Ali) just outside the Menara Mosque in the city of Kudus on the north coast of central Java. As it happens, this mosque is situated adjacent to the tomb of one of the nine Javanese *wali* (that of Sunan Kudus) and the complex is thus popular with Javanese pilgrims. *Pak* Ali expressed his disgust with some of the pilgrims—which he often guided through the complex—when he overheard them asking for their own well-being and fortune, not seldom in prayers directed not to God but to the *wali*. According to Pak Ali, these pilgrims would have been better off staying at home in the first place: not only would their prayers not be answered, they would also return home with sins they bore not prior to their departure. Taking his arguments to the limit, he also said that one could regard them as if they returned to their homes as non-Muslims. We thus see that there is serious criticism of heterodox Sufi practices originating from within the Sufi ranks,[152] which, in turn, draws attention to the oft-neglected Sufi occupation with Muslim orthodoxy.[153]

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[148] Labib 2000: 14.
[149] QS 59:10.
[150] Hoffman 1995: 120.
[151] Hoffman 1995: 119f.
[152] This has been reported from other areas elsewhere; see for example Hoffman 1995, Sirriyeh 1999, and Trimingham [1971] 1998.
[153] The practice of *ziarah* in Java has recently been the subject of some research, to which the interested reader is referred: van Doorn-Harder 2002, de Jonge 1998, Jamhari 2000, Jamhari 2001, Doorn-Harder & de Jonge 2001.

Traditional or traditionalist Islam in Java—and, consequently, in this thesis—is first and foremost represented by the organization Nahdlatul Ulama (NU, the Renaissance of the Religious Scholars, A. *nahḍātu l-ᶜulamāᵓ*).[154] Although established much—but not exclusively—as a response to various modernist dittos, I choose to discuss NU and the traditional Islam it represents prior to discussing modernism, since traditional understandings of Islam were dominant prior to the coming of modernist ideas. Further, traditional Islam in Java has close links to Sufi interpretations of Islam, as elaborated upon above.

Traditional Islam should here be understood as an Islam, in the words of Dhofier,

> that is still strongly bound up with established Islamic ideas created by scholars, jurists, doctors, and Sufis during the early centuries of Islamic theological and legal develop ment, sectarian conflicts, and the rise of Sufi movement and brotherhoods in the thirteenth century."[155]

It should not, however, be understood as stagnant or backward (as the term 'traditional' has come to mean at times). As we will see, traditional Muslims in Java can be very progressive, liberal, and even 'modern.' Indeed, 'tradition' and 'transformation' are not opposites in the minds of many Javanese traditionalists,[156] who are as devoted to the quest of adjusting Islam to the contemporary world as are their modernist equivalents. It might also be, as proposed by van Bruinessen, that some modernists adhere more stiffly to the ideas of the twentieth century thinkers-*cum*-activists al-Bannāᵓ, Quṭb and Mawdūdī (thus engaging in some kind of *taqlīd*), than the traditionalists adhere to the four legal schools of Islamic law.[157] A similar interpretation of the relation between Muslim modernists and traditionalists in Java was recently presented by the Indonesian modernist Abu Su'ud. In a short article he argued—based largely on the Abshar-Abdalla incident, discussed below—that Indonesian modernists are becoming increasingly traditional, whereas the traditionalists are becoming increasingly modern.[158]

Traditional Islam in Java is closely associated with the Islamic boarding schools, the *pesantren*, and the religious scholars active therein, the *kyai*.[159] There are some 6,000 such NU-affiliated *pesantren* throughout Indonesia

[154] At the time of establishment, the organization was, in line with the old spelling system of Indonesian, referred to as *Nahdlatoel 'Oelama*.
[155] Dhofier 1999: xix.
[156] van Bruinessen 1994b: [pendahuluan].
[157] van Bruinessen 1994b: [pendahuluan].
[158] Su'ud 2003.
[159] See Dhofier 1999. The *pesantren* are sometimes referred to as *pondok* (lit. bamboo hut) or *pondok pesantren*. .

today,[160] and the number of Javanese who have spent time as a student, *santri*, in one of these is substantial. Since the 1950s, the importance of the *pesantren* as an educational institution has diminished, and many minor *pesantren* has disappeared. Others, however, have adjusted to the expectations of the community, and hence developed *pesantren* which teach not only religious subjects but also guide the students through, say, mathematics and English. Some have even established officially recognized counterparts to the junior and senior high schools, and thus teach the national curriculum.[161] In the minds of most Javanese, however, the *pesantren* remains a place for religious studies, and students at these boarding schools are generally thought of as pious, learned, and devout Muslims. It happens that the very term *santri*—that is, student at a *pesantren*—has come to denote Islamic orthodoxy in Java (and Indonesia). The boarding schools are thus 'producing' orthodox Muslims. One man, *Mas* Wahyu—that I oddly enough ran into every once in a while in Yogyakarta (and thus got to know)—told me how he had entered several *pesantren* not so much as part of his search for religious knowledge, but rather as part of his search for a place to lay down his body when night fell. Practically living on the busy streets of Javanese cities, he regarded the *pesantren* peacefulness a welcome change in surroundings. Describing himself as an *orang Islam KTP*, or 'identity card Muslim'[162] prior to his *pesantren* retreats, he did not lay much weight at Islamic ritual, instead socializing with, according to Javanese standards, rather dubious characters. After some time in the *pesantren*, however, he began to perform the ritual worship regularly, fasted during Ramadan, and tried to live in accordance with what he regarded as Islamic law. The last time I met him he also expressed his will to settle down, marry a "veiled girl," and diligently perform ritual prayer with his planned family. He had thus become a *santri par excellence*. We learn two things from the experience of *Mas* Wahyu: first, that the Islamization of Java *does* go on, and second, that *pesantren* are instrumental in this Islamization, and developing of an Islamic orthodoxy.

The position of the *kyai* is a respected one in Java. He is in general a leader of a *pesantren*, and revered by his students and others. Being an "elite group"[163] in Java, these *kyai* can be rather influential in both religious and political issues in contemporary Indonesia. Some *kyai* even have an interna-

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[160] Falaakh 2001: 40.

[161] Some *pesantren* also attract foreign students, primarily from Malaysia and southern Thailand. According to some Thais I had regular contact with in Yogyakarta, there are in general two groups of Thai students in Javanese religious schools: first, those eager to pursue their religious studies abroad in order to widen their horizon, and second, those who have experienced (severe) problems in the form of criminality and drug abuse back home, and thus been 'sent away' to Java as part of their rehabilitation.

[162] The meaning of which is a non-practicing Muslim. Religious affiliation is stated on Indonesian identity cards.

[163] Dhofier 1999: 34f. See also van Bruinessen (1994b: [Akar Sosial NU: Pesantren dan Tarekat]) who speaks of the *kyai* families as a special "caste" (with citations in original) in Javanese society.

tional reputation, and foremost among these is probably the figure of KH (*Kyai Haji*) Abdurrahman Wahid—former president of Indonesia and chairman of NU. The *kyai* is generally thought of as being a source of *barakah*, blessings, and some are thought of as living saints, or *wali.* Again, Wahid serves as a good example: traditionalist Javanese Muslims can wait for hours to get a glimpse of the charismatic leader, and to shake—or rather, to kiss—his hand or otherwise touch him is regarded as a very prosperous achievement. Wahid's 'saintly characteristics' were widely discussed in the aftermath of him being elected fourth president of the republic, and many Javanese were quick to note the fact that Wahid and his *Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa* only received a minor amount of votes in comparison to, for example, Megawati Soekarnoputri and her *Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan.* According to traditional Javanese logic, Wahid became president due to him being a powerful *kyai* and a 'friend of God' (I. *wali Allah*, A. *walīu llāh*)—the actual votes played only a minor role.

A traditional Javanese *kyai* shares many characteristics with a Sufi *shaykh.* Indeed, there is a general "Sufi sensibility" in Javanese traditional Islam, and many of the *kyai* are not only *ulama*, religious scholars, but also mystics.[164] This presupposition was probably more applicable a hundred years ago than it is now—at a time when not all *kyai* are outspoken defenders of Islamic mysticism—, but we must nevertheless appreciate a Sufi inclination of traditional Javanese Islam. As such, traditional Islam in Java—as Sufi inclined patterns of Islam elsewhere—has been more appreciative of local cultures, non-Islamic religions, and prevailing social conditions, than has, say, modernist interpretations of Islam. Traditionalists are thus prone to accept the practice of visiting graves of ancestors and the tombs of saints,[165] and they are likely to be convinced of the existence of special blessed places, persons, Koranic verses, etc. They are also probable to perform recitations at the grave of a newly deceased relative with the belief that the religious merit it causes can be transferred to the buried person. In addition, they also host communal meals, *slametan*, on the third, seventh, fortieth, one hundredth, and one thousandth day of death, in addition to the ones hosted at the first and second anniversary of death. A traditional Javanese will also sponsor *slametan* at several other occasions, including at the times of seven months of pregnancy, circumcision, before the month of fasting (see chapter five below), and before embarking on a long journey. Overall, traditional Javanese Muslims are clinging on to some pre- or extra-Islamic Javanese practices, but it should be noted that many of these have been Islamized to such a degree that it is hard or impossible to detect anything 'un-Islamic' about them. The *slametan* is a case in point, as will be discussed later.

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[164] Barton 1997: 36. Cf. Woodward 1989: 60.

[165] One of the first things KH Abdurrahman Wahid made as president of Indonesia was to perform a pilgrimage to his ancestor's tombs.

Another general characteristic of traditional Islam in Java, touched upon above, is its adherence to the four major legal schools, that is the Mālikī, the Ḥanafī, the Ḥanbalī, and especially the Shāfiᶜī *madhāhib* (A., pl. of *madhhab*, legal school). Traditional *ulama* thus stress the importance of the works of their previous colleagues, and emphasize the necessity of *taklid* (I., A. *taqlīd*). The Scripture and the collections of traditions, the traditionalists hold, are not so unambiguous that one can deny the collective wisdom of previous outstanding scholars. In fact, it would be rather dumb to do just that. This standpoint has led to occasional fierce debates with the modernists, each side accusing the other for blasphemy and disbelief. Traditional *kyai* hold that legal and theological arguments must be based not only in the Koran and the *sunnah* of the prophet, but also in the consensus and collective wisdom of the *ulama*. As such, they are not propagators of individual *ijtihad* (I., A. *ijtihād*), something that one traditionalist writer characterizes as "sweet, yet very misleading."[166] However, members of the contemporary young generation of NU affiliated intellectuals, has recently proposed daring new interpretations of Islam, and it seems as if we must acknowledge a rather loose attachment to absolute *taklid* in certain traditional surroundings. Abdurrahman Wahid has attracted much criticism from within NU ranks for his emphasis on *ijtihad* and modernization along traditional lines, and Ulil Abshar-Abdalla, one of whose articles will be discussed below, has likewise been the subject of much criticism.

Now, let us return to the Nahdlatul Ulama itself. The history and character of this organization has been dealt with by van Bruinessen,[167] and only some general notes will be made here. The Nahdlatul Ulama was established in Surabaya, East Java, in 1926, partly as a response to the modernist movement, led by the Muhammadiyah, but also partly as a reaction to international events. The 1920s saw both the abolishment of the Islamic Caliphate and the attack on Mecca by the Wahhābīs—two events that were disturbing to the traditionalist community in Java and elsewhere. To safeguard the interests of the traditionalists, the organization Nahdlatul Ulama (I., the Renaissance of the Religious Scholars) was established, with *kyai* Hasyim Asy'ari—Abdurrahman Wahid's grandfather—as chairman, during a meeting that initially had another intent (i.e., to select representatives to be sent to Mecca in order to discuss the future of the legal schools with Ibn Saᶜūd). The most active person in this establishment, *kyai* Wahab Chasbullah, had actually proposed such an organization a couple of years earlier. Asy'ari was at that time, however, not interested, whereas Wahab, realizing that he could not proclaim such an organization without the support of this influential *kyai*, rested his case until Mecca was attacked. Now things came in another perspective, and Asy'ari realized the need for a traditionalist Muslim organization. In what was later to become the organization's declaration, it was

[166] Siradjuddin Abbas, as quoted in Federspiel 1996: 205.
[167] van Bruinessen 1994b. The present discussion is largely based on this work.

amongst other things stated that the *nahdliyin* (as the members of NU are called) were to hold firm (I. *memegang teguh*) the works of the classical legal schools.[168] And this was in stark contrast to the ideals of the modernists.

Interest and membership in Nahdlatul Ulama rose fast and continuously, and the *nahdliyin* can today proudly denote themselves as members of the world's largest Muslim organization (with some 35-40 million members). The history of the organization cannot be dealt with in detail here, but we should note the different attitudes of the Nahdlatul Ulama towards national politics, which have involved abstention (during the Dutch colonial period), interest (during the Japanese occupation), radical and active participation (during the Revolution), activism through the NU political party (1949-1984), abstention (1984-1998), and a returning interest (1998-). This is just one indicator of Javanese traditionalist Islam's dynamic character. It should also finally be noted that although the organization has established branches throughout Indonesia, Central and East Java (including Madura) are still its strongholds. This condition has at times led to heated debates between Javanese *kyai* and their non-Javanese *nahdliyin* counterparts.[169] Of course, any organization of this magnitude is bound to become the host of inter-organizational quarrels and disputes, and NU makes no exception from this rule.[170]

MODERNIST ISLAM

Early Islamic modernism in Java was largely influenced by Middle Eastern activists and intellectuals such as Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī (d. 1897), Muḥammad ʿAbduh (d. 1905) and Rashīd Riḍā (d. 1935). These had initiated a modernist movement (primarily in Egypt) around the turn of the century and greatly influenced Javanese pilgrims and students who visited the era. (Not all, however, were thrilled by the modernist ideas: KH Hasyim Asy'ari, for example, studied in Mecca during this time, but remained faithful to his traditional conviction.) The modernists further published much of their ideas in books, journals, and pamphlets and some of these Middle Eastern publications reached the Indies, despite Dutch attempts of preventing this.[171] As it happened, the modernist pioneers in Indonesia were centered in the Minangkabau area in Sumatra, with men such as *Sjech* Ahmad Chatib , *Sjech* Thaher

[168] van Bruinessen 1994b: [Bab 1: Lahirnya Nahdlatul Ulama: Latar Tradisi, Sosial dan Internasional]. See also van Bruinessen 1994b: [Lampiran IV: Prinsip dan Tujuan NU] for an overview of how the goals and principles of the NU have changed over time.

[169] van Bruinessen 1994b: [Bab 5: Akar Sosial NU: Pesantren dan Tarekat].

[170] More information on the NU in the form of online books can be found at the homepage of the 'special branch' (I. *cabang istimewa*) of NU in Cairo [http://www.kmnu.org]. There is at the time of writing at least one book in English (click on "Pustaka NU Online").

[171] Noer 1973: 32, n. 4. Some of this written material was smuggled into Java through the port of Tuban, East Java.

Djalalauddin and *Haji* Abdullah Ahmad in the front line.[172] Theirs and others efforts resulted in the establishment of several modernist organizations in early twentieth century Indonesia, but it was, however, primarily the Javanese Muhammadiyah and the Sundanese Persatuan Islam (Persis; Islamic Union) that stood the test of time and survived to our days. (My discussion here is thus limited to these two organizations, with an emphasis on the former due to its importance in contemporary Java.)[173]

Common to all (Javanese) modernists was a perceived need to purify Islam through a return to the Koran and the *sunnah* of the Prophet. Particularly, the modernists turned much of their attention towards the traditionalists and the 'syncretists,' accusing them of engaging in *bid'ah* (I., A. *bidᶜah*, innovation) and *khurafat* (I., A. *khurāfah*, superstition). The modernists regarded, moreover, Muslim society to be in a state of decadence, and that this was a direct result of the rigorous adherence of Muslims of that time to the various legal schools. They thus argued for new interpretations (I. *ijtihad*) of the Islamic message in the light of the modern and progressive era they lived in, and had as one of their goals to prove the compatibility of Islam with modernity. They took a harsh stand towards all popular religious practices, and generally condemned those practices that were adhered to by the traditionalists, including the *slametan* (J. communal meal), the visiting of tombs (I. *ziarah*), and the recitation for the deceased (I. *talqin*). Their attitude toward Sufism was likewise one of reluctance at best, and condemnation at worst. Indeed, much of all the practices criticized by the modernists constituted according to the same nothing but *syirk* (I., A. *shirk*, idolatry), and they distanced themselves from everything that was not clearly and reliably grounded in the Koran and the *sunnah.* (The traditionalists, on the other hand, tended to approve of a whole lot of practices as long as they were not explicitly forbidden in the canonical sources.) Many of the tensions that arouse between modernists and traditionalists endure (in softened forms) to this day, but we can mention at least one in which there has been reached a consensus, e.g., the matter of the Arabic language versus vernaculars. Prior to the onset of the Islamic modernism, the language of the Friday sermon (I. *khutbah*) had been Arabic. It was argued that as part of the ritual, the sermon had to be delivered in that language, and as such, it is rather safe to conclude that the *khutbah* was nothing more than a long unintelligible recitation to most Javanese. This led the modernists to argue for the use of vernaculars, with the reservation that Arabic had to be sustained in the prayers. Slowly, this idea gained ground,[174] and I have so far never heard an all-Arabic sermon in Java (or on any other Indonesian island, for that sake). A regular Friday sermon in

[172] Noer 1973: 30ff. Overall, the modernist project was more successful in Sumatra than it was in Java (Alfian 1989: 131).

[173] My usage of the terms 'Javanese' and 'Sundanese' should here only be understood as a reference to the organizations' places of origin, and thus not to their areas of membership.

[174] Federspiel 2001: 58. Large number of mosques under modernist influence continued, however, with the Arabic sermon initially.

contemporary Java begins with some Arabic standard phrases—including blessings on the prophet—and likewise ends with a prayer in Arabic, but the sermon *per se* is perpetually delivered in either Indonesian or Javanese. Interestingly, Geertz reported from Java in the 1950s that the debate over the language over the Friday sermon was still lively debated, and that most "conservative" (i.e., traditionalist) mosques still used the Arabic.[175] Prior to the days of Islamic modernism, the language used in the written Islamic material was likewise Arabic, or, in same cases, Malay written in Arabic script (I. *jawi*).[176] Now that too has changed, and the large majority of the books dealing with Islamic issues in contemporary Indonesia is written in the national language (*Bahasa Indonesia*). (It is perhaps noteworthy that the Indonesian journal *Studia Islamika* accepts three languages: Indonesian, English, and Arabic.)

Having shortly discussed the general characteristics of Islamic modernism in Java, let us now turn to the actual organizations. KH Ahmad Dahlan was born (as Muhammad Darwisy) in 1868 in Yogyakarta, and was to forever change the Javanese Islamic landscape with the establishment of Muhammadiyah in 1912. His parents were both from *ulama* families, and his father served as *abdi dalem* (J., royal servant) in the Yogyakartan *keraton* (J., palace).[177] At the age of 22 the young Muhammad went to Mecca for the first time, where he was influenced by modernist ideas.[178] Consequently, upon his return to Java he began the perceived great task of purifying Javanese Islam from what he regarded as extra-Islamic practices and ideas. One oft-cited concern of Dahlan was that of the direction for praying, the *kiblat* (I., A. *qiblah*).[179] Traditionally, mosques in Java faced west, but Dahlan's calculations showed that the precise direction of Mecca actually was a few degrees to the north. Thus, the Muslim community in Java had performed their prayers in a faulty direction for centuries, something that Dahlan now intended to change. Thus, he frankly painted new lines on the floor of the great Sultan's Mosque in Yogyakarta, something which naturally attracted the wrath of the establishment who had the additional lines erased immediately. The young Dahlan then built his own small prayer house in the 'correct' direction, but this *langgar* (J.) was to be destroyed before long. Finally, he built yet another prayer house in the 'old' direction, but performed the prayers turned north-west inside it—and this was a compromise that was accepted by both sides. Interestingly, many mosques in contemporary Yogyakarta face west, whereas the congregation follows additional lines within the mosque thus facing north-west. Some congregations, however, continue to face east, and I also have attended some mosques that host a

[175] Geertz 1960: 219.
[176] Federspiel 2001: 66f.
[177] See Alfian 1989: 136ff and Noer 1973: 73ff.
[178] Interestingly, Dahlan remained faithful theologically to the traditionalist al-Ashᶜarī, and did not share the Egyptian modernist closeness to Muᶜtazilī ideas (Pasha & Darban 2002: 120).
[179] Alfian 1989: 146ff, Noer 1973: 74, Pasha & Darban 2002: 104f.

blending of the two attitudes, in that the congregation proper faces west, whereas the *imam* faces north-west. The *kiblat*-anecdote is still popular with members of the Muhammadiyah, and often highlighted as proof of the consistency and, ultimately, correctness of Ahmad Dahlan. The anecdote is also a very clear example of the use of *ijtihad* in place of *taklid*, and the opposition that can meet from established religious scholars.[180]

Yet another story of the life of KH Ahmad Dahlan may be illuminative, namely that of his morning classes.[181] As with the *kiblat*-anecdote mentioned above, this story too is popular among contemporary Muhammadiyah members, and is thought to emphasize the pragmatic nature of the organization's founding father. It goes like this: Every morning after the dawn ritual prayer, Dahlan gave Koranic lectures to a handful of enthusiastic students. For some time—several weeks, in fact—he had pondered upon the short *sūratu l-mā*^{c}*ūn* (QS 107) and the students began to grow restless and somewhat bored. Finally, one student found the courage it took to mention the fact he and his friends by now had understood that particular chapter, and were eager to move on. Dahlan asked if they all really had understood it, and was given an answer in the affirmative. He then asked if they also had implemented it (I. *mengamalkan*) in their daily lives. The students replied that they indeed recited the particular chapter during ritual prayer, and thus regarded themselves ready to proceed to other topics. Dahlan was not satisfied with this answer, however, and said that they had misunderstood his lesson. He then ordered his students to go out and look for poor people and invite them to their homes, give them soap, clothes, drink, food, and a place to sleep. According to the pragmatist Dahlan, that was what *sūratu l-mā*^{c}*ūn* was all about, in that it says:

> Hast thou ever considered [the kind of man] who gives the lie to all moral law (*ad-dīn*)?
> Behold, it is this [kind of man] that thrusts the orphan away,
> and feels no urge to feed the needy.
> Woe, then, unto those praying ones
> whose hearts from their prayer (*ṣalāh*) are remote –
> those who want only to be seen and praised,
> and, withal, deny all assistance [to their fellowmen]![182]

In 1912, Ahmad Dahlan established his Muhammadiyah in Yogyakarta. Due to Dutch restrictions at the time, the organization was only allowed ini-

[180] The direction of the *kiblat* continues to engage. In early 2003, an e-mail from 'Oscar' showed up in the *Muhammadiyah_Society* e-group (at Yahoo!) in which he reminded that on May 28th that year at 16:17:52 (Western Indonesian Time) the sun would be exactly above Ka'bah in Mecca. Consequently, any upstanding object in Indonesia at that time would have its shadow showing the exact direction of the *kiblat*. 'Oscar' recommended a calibration of the *kiblat* at this occasion, and reminded that it would happen again on July 16th (2003) at 16:26:40.
[181] See for example Alfian 1989: 173, *Suara Hidayatullah,* July 2000.
[182] QS 107:1-7.

tially to be active in the Yogyakarta area, and the aim and goals of the movement were formulated in two points:

1. To spread the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, among the natives of the Yogyakarta residency, and
2. To promote Islamic issues to its members.[183]

This aim of the Muhammadiyah has undergone changes during the organization's history, and is today to "uphold and revere the religion of Islam in order to materialize a prosperous and just society blessed by God, the Exalted."[184]

In its quest for this aim, the Muhammadiyah has developed into a highly respected and influential social-religious organization, with special attention towards educational issues, and has today branches all over the archipelago.[185] The educational institutions range from kindergartens to universities, and are generally held in high esteem; I know of several parents who send their children to Muhammadiyah schools, although they do not sympathize with the Muhammadiyah as an organization. Very popular are also the Muhammadiyah hospitals, which are cheaper than, and—in popular accounts, at least—almost as good as, their Christian counterparts. In Yogyakarta, the Muhammadiyah Hospital (generally referred to as the PKU, *Penolong Kesengsaraan Umum*, or the Relief of the People's Sufferings) is ever busy with lower- and middleclass Muslims seeking medical help at all hours of the day. The organization also has numerous orphanages throughout the country, and its women's wing, the *Aisyiah*, is popular with modernist females.

Though the Muhammadiyah is consistent with its perceived mission of purifying (Javanese) Islam, the organization has generally retained a sober attitude to what it aims at changing—without falling into more radical ravines—, and is today part of mainstream Islam in Indonesia. As the 1995 national conference confirmed with the statement that Muhammadiyah now should lead "prayers (*do'a*) [as distinct from ritual worship, *sholat*] and *dzikir* according to the *sunnah*," there has even been a gradual turning towards Sufism within Muhammadiyah ranks.[186] This turning has helped in "softening the distinctions" between modernists and traditionalists.[187] On the Muhammadiyah homepage, there was in early 2003 an article written by a lec-

[183] See Pasha & Darban 2002: 123.
[184] Pasha & Darban 2002: 127. *Menegakkan dan menjunjung tinggi agama Islam sehingga terwujud masyarakat utama, adil dan makmur yang diridlai Allah Subhanahu wata'ala.*
[185] It is noteworthy that the organization has remained apolitical throughout its history. True, former chairman Amien Rais did establish a political party (*Partai Amanat Nasional*) shortly after the downfall of Soeharto, but this party does not explicitly and exclusively appeal to Muhammadiyah voters. Indeed, the party is not even explicitly Islamic and instead open for all Indonesians, regardless of religious or ethnic affiliation.
[186] Howell 2001: 712.
[187] Howell 2001: 713.

turer at a Muhammadiyah university that, amongst other things, stated that it is about time that the organization opens itself up for Sufi interpretations of Islam,[188] and there indeed seems to be a renewed interest for mysticism among modernists in Java.

The other Indonesian modernist group to be shortly examined here, the Persatuan Islam (Persis), or Islamic Union, has developed along different lines, and comes close to radicalism in certain respects.[189] Established in Bandung, West Java, in 1923, the organization advocated a return to the 'true Islam' as embodied in the Koran and the *sunnah* by way of *ijtihad.* As other modernists, they turned against certain popular aspects of Javanese religiosity, including the communal meal (J. *slametan*), saint worship, the use of magic and amulets, and the belief in lucky days. They also held an overall negative assessment of Sufism, and denounced its practices. Compared to the Muhammadiyah, members of the Persis were, however, rather inpatient and intolerant, and readily denounced and condemned other Muslims publicly.[190] In the long run, Federspiel says, Persis also strives for the establishment of an Islamic state in Indonesia.[191] This last concern has recently been reactualized, and the 2000 Persis national meeting (I. *muktamar*) issued a short paper in which they clearly demanded the implementation of Islamic law in Indonesia.[192] Not surprisingly then, there has been no approach towards Sufism within the Islamic Union; in a recent *fatwa* (I., legal opinion) entitled "The Position of Sufism within Islam" its *ulama* state that "it is not clear whether *tasawuf* and Sufism have their point of origin in Islam or not," and then goes on to enumerate several Sufi practices to be regarded as having no basis in Islam.[193]

We need not dwell for too long upon Persatuan Islam, since this organization will have little, or nothing, to contribute to the discussions in subsequent chapters. I have mentioned it here in order to emphasize the fact that Islamic modernism in Java is a multifaceted phenomenon.[194]

RADICAL ISLAM[195]

The Republic of Indonesia has during its history seen the rise of different radical movements,[196] as the pre-Republic archipelago did previously in its

[188] *Muhammadiyah* 2003.
[189] For a thorough discussion of Persatuan Islam, see Federspiel 2001.
[190] Noer 1973: 94f.
[191] Federspiel 2001: 238f.
[192] *Persatuan Islam* 2000a.
[193] *Persatuan Islam* 2000b.
[194] For more, easy accessible, material on the Persis, see their homepage [http://persis.or.id/site].
[195] Here the proposed, huge parenthesis begins.
[196] See van Dijk 1981, Bruinessen 2002.

struggle against Dutch colonialism.[197] Here it is, however, the post-Soeharto era that will attract our attention.

As we saw above, Soeharto approached and accommodated Islam and Muslims in various ways during the latter part of his presidency, and, in fact, "sponsored neofundamentalist groupings" some time prior to his withdrawal.[198] But it was in the post-Soeharto era of reformation that radical groups found their real momentum, and thus sprang forth *bak jamur di musim hujan*, like mushrooms in the rainy season, to use an Indonesian saying. Radical organizations that had existed already under *Orde Baru* (Soeharto's New Order regime, 1966-1998) like *Komite Indonesia untuk Solidaritas Dunia Islam* (KISDI) were now joined by new ones such as *Laskar Jihad*, *Hizbut Tahrir, Front Pembela Islam* (FPI) and *Majelis Mujahidin*.[199] In the words of Zada, these Islamic organizations

> ...exhibit an exclusive, symbolic, literal and radical religious attitude. Their totalistic view of Islam causes their religious practices to be very literal and radical too, and they are even prepared to act without compromises in the spirit of jihad.[200]

According to the same author, these radical organizations share four themes that they fight for: the re-implementation of the *Piagam Jakarta*; the elimination of 'places of immorality' (I. *pemberantasan tempat-tempat maksiat*); issues concerning inter-religious conflicts; and solidarity with the worldwide Islamic community.[201] These four themes need short clarification. The *Piagam Jakarta,* or Jakarta Charter, refers to the seven words that were eliminated from the 1945 Constitution shortly after their inclusion in the same document. These seven words read *dengan kewajiban menjalankan syariat Islam bagi pemeluk-pemeluknya* (I.)*,* or, in other words, "with the obligation to carry out Islamic law for Muslims," and were written after the general principle of 'belief in God.' After protests from Hindus, Christians and nationalists, the Jakarta Charter was abolished on August 18, 1945 (only one day after independence), and replaced with the principle (I. from S. *sila*) of belief in 'a singular God' (I. *ketuhanan yang Maha Esa*). Though this formulation appealed to Muslims' ideas and ideals of *tawḥīd* (A., unity, monotheism, I. *tauhid*), it was still a backlash for portions of the Indonesian Muslim community.

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[197] E.g. Dobbin 1983.
[198] Hefner 2002b: 760.
[199] Zada 2002b: 77. See Bruinessen 2002 for a genealogy of Islamic radicalism, with an emphasis on the post-Soeharto era, in Indonesia. See also Azra 2002b and Mujani 2003: 86-93.
[200] Zada 2002b: 77.
[201] Zada 2002b: 161. Note that non-radical Indonesian Muslims may share these concerns to various degrees with the radicals. The point to be made here is that the radical Muslims put an immense emphasis on these concerns in comparison to other Muslims in the country.

Discussions of the Jakarta Charter have erupted from time to time,[202] recently for example in the 2002 Yearly Session (I. *Sidang Tahunan*) in the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR), where the fractions of two political parties (*Partai Bulan Bintang* and *Partai Persatuan Pembangunan*) argued—in vain—for the re-implementation of article 29 in the constitution.[203] Though the *Piagam Jakarta* never made its re-entry into the constitution, members of the radical *Laskar Jihad* (I., the Jihad Militia) showed their commitment to what they regard to be Islamic law, when one of their own members, Abdullah, was stoned to death in March, 2001, due to him having had extra-marital sexual relations.[204] In the speech of the *Laskar Jihad* leader (or commander, I. *panglima*, as he is usually called) Ja'far Umar Thalib just prior to the stoning, the government of Indonesia, led at the time by the traditionalist/neo-modernist Abdurrahman Wahid, was noted for its inability to care for its subjects, and the president himself was portrayed as an "unbeliever (I. *kafir*) insulting and humiliating Islamic law."[205] On the *Laskar Jihad* homepage (no longer operated) it was also said that Abdullah had accepted his sentence with sincerity (I. *dengan ikhlas*).[206]

The second theme, which concerns the elimination of immorality in the Indonesian Muslim community, has been pioneered by *Front Pembela Islam*, or the Islamic Defenders' Front. Its leader, Habib Rizieq Shihab, is quoted of saying concerning places such as discotheques, bars, massage parlors, gambling halls and other 'immoral places' that they will have to be 'exterminated' from the Indonesian public scene, since they so openly are in conflict with the law.[207] During the years 1999-2002, Indonesian newspapers often held small notices telling about FPIs latest raids,[208] and the *anti-maksiat* movement (as it is referred to) they represent normally increased in intensity during the month of Ramadan. Thus, in late 2000 they succeeded in forcing the Governor of Jakarta, Sutiyoso, to close all *maksiat* places during the holy month of fasting—something which, of course, resulted in demonstrations from people having their income from the entertainment sector. It should be noted that practices involving the extinction of what is regarded as immoral are not exclusive to FPI or other radicals; as we will se in a subsequent chapter, Ramadan is a month in which various Muslim groups get together and smash bottles of beer and harass prostitutes. The difference is that the radicals take the law in their own hands, whereas the others generally act together with the police and other authorities. In passing, mention can also be made of the fact that the Islamic Defenders' Front was very active in the criticism and

[202] See for example Hefner 2000: 80, 91, Ricklefs 1993: 264ff.
[203] See for example *Kompas* 2002-03-22, *Pikiran Rakyat* 2002-08-10. The same had happened during the *Sidang Tahunan* of 2000 and 2001 (see Zada 2002b: 120).
[204] See *Suara Hidayatullah,* June 2001.
[205] *Laskar Jihad* 2001a.
[206] *Laskar Jihad* 2001b.
[207] *Suara Hidayatullah,* May 2001.
[208] E.g. *Pikiran Rakyat* 2002-07-09, *Suara Merdeka* 2002-03-16, *Kompas* 2002-08-21.

threats directed at the United States immediately after the events of September 11, 2001. Foreigners—firstly Americans and British, but then again, a Westerner is a Westerner in Indonesia—were threatened by FPI 'sweeping' actions and were demanded to leave the country. ('Sweeping' is a term, used in the English original, that in Indonesia approximately holds the meaning of harsh deportation.) These threats never materialized, though there were rumors that certain hotels in the central Javanese town of Solo had been 'swept.'

As for the third theme mentioned above, that of inter-religious relations, it is *Laskar Jihad*, or the Jihad Militia, that has been most vocal. This group was established in early 2000 in response to a perceived inability of the Indonesian government to bring peace to the Moluccan islands and the inter-religious problems it had experienced since 1999. As quoted by Greg Fealy, commander (I. *panglima*) Ja'far Umar Thalib had it that President Abdurrahman Wahid was "unable or unwilling to protect the Islamic community" in the Moluccan Islands.[209] Hence the Jihad Militia was formed and members ready to be sent to engage themselves in *jihad* in the Moluccan islands were recruited in small, primitive stands around Java. In Yogyakarta, the militia set up a small hut at the end of the popular and well-known Malioboro Street, not far from the Sultan's palace. According to the bearded and 'Arabic-dressed' young men in the hut, Muslims from all age groups and social backgrounds enrolled themselves, though there seems to have been a heavy concentration on young, newly urban, men. About a year later, an acquaintance of mine told me of her mother having sought after her son tirelessly during six months, before she understood he had left with the militia to the Moluccan islands. (Whereupon yet another acquaintance commented upon the very 'un-Islamic' manner it was to leave one's parents without neither bidding one's farewell nor ask for their blessings.)

After an initial registration of members and military training in Bogor in West Java, Thalib—who himself is a proud veteran of the Afghanistan-Soviet war—sent thousands of his men to Ambon in the Moluccas, and later also to Poso in central Sulawesi, to help their Muslim brothers and sisters in their struggle against the Christians. President Wahid tried to put an end to this, but did not succeed. Not surprisingly, in the 2002 *Human Rights Watch* report on Indonesia, members of the *Laskar Jihad* were reported to have engaged in various kinds of human rights violations in the area. This report also stated that Indonesia by October 2001 was the home of "well over one million" displaced persons (refugees), and that half of that figure stemmed from the Moluccas.[210] In other words, the area was rather chaotic, and the Jihad Militia saw it as their pious assignment to settle the conflict in favor of the Muslims.

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[209] Fealy 2001. Jaf'ar also held that NU and Muhammadiyah deviated from the Koran and the *sunnah* of the prophet (*ibid.*).
[210] *Human Rights Watch* 2002.

The fourth and last theme for the radicals in Indonesia concerns the worldwide support for Muslims. For radical Muslims, as for others, the limits of the nation-state seem rather superficial and non-productive, and there is instead an emphasis on the welfare of the worldwide Islamic community, the *umat* (I., A. *ᶜummah*). KISDI, the Indonesian Committee for Solidarity with the World of Islam, was established in 1987 with the goal to strengthen Indonesian sympathies for the Palestinian case, but later widened its horizon to include the struggles of Muslims in Bosnia, Kashmir, Iraq, Afghanistan and other areas on their agenda.[211] As one of the embryos of "neofundamentalism"[212] in Indonesia, the KISDI holds a conservative interpretation of Islam, and its founders are "firm believers in a Western Jewish and Christian conspiracy to weaken or destroy Islam."[213]

Thus, when then-president Abdurrahman Wahid announced his intention of inaugurating trade relations with Israel in late 1999, KISDI members were in the front of the demonstrations. Ahmad Soemargono, head of KISDI, stated that the Islamic community could not accept such relations, and that they even would violate the Indonesian constitution since trade relations would acknowledge Israel as a state.[214] Wahid's ideas were postponed. About one year later, KISDI presented its views on the Israel-Palestine conflict in a press release, in which the Israelis were described as colonialists defrauding the Palestinians, whereas the task of all Muslims was described as to release Palestine from the clutches of that Zionist colonization.[215]

Such might an introductory picture of Islamic radicalism in contemporary Indonesia look like. The radicals make great headlines, both nationally and internationally—as do radicals elsewhere—but their impact should not be exaggerated. In the 1999 elections—the first 'free' elections since 1955 in Indonesia—the two 'radical' parties PBB and PK received both under two percent of the votes, whereas the PPP ended up fourth in the elections with 11 percent. The votes they received were thus largely outnumbered by the votes of the 'non-Islamic' PDI-P, Golkar and PKB. We should also note that Islamic radicalism in Indonesia first and foremost is a cosmopolitan phenomenon. Outside the large cities, Islamic radicalism in its organized form is normally absent from public life, and, if present at all, usually oppressed to some marginal underground movement. When the United States initiated war in Afghanistan in late 2001, my home city at the time, Yogyakarta, became a relatively unpleasant place to be for foreigners. There were demonstrations, threats of 'sweeping,' questions asked about nationality, and so on. The Yogyakarta police even had plans for evacuating all foreigners in town, I learned afterwards. Some weeks later when I arrived in Blora, the situation

[211] Hefner 2000: 109f.
[212] Hefner 2002b: 757.
[213] Bruinessen 2002.
[214] *Gatra Online* 1999-11-27.
[215] See Zada 2002b: 167.

was totally different. There were no signs of hostility or suspicion directed towards me, and when I inquired about the American war and Muslim reactions to it, there was a general consensus that the war was indeed very sad business for the Muslim *umat*, but that the Blorans had neither time nor the will to hunt down foreigners. "We're all busy searching for water and trying to provide for our families; there are no fanatics (I. *orang fanatik* [i.e. radicals]) here," I was told.

Finally, as a postscript to what has been said above, it should be added that the *Laskar Jihad* dissolved itself in October 2002 due to self-criticism: it was felt by the militia that it had begun to diverge from the goals and methods it had set up from the beginning.[216] With similar arguments, the FPI militia division (I. *kelaskaran*) was also frozen in November 2002.[217] A Muslim liberal, Kurniawan Abdullah, was thus quick to note the demise of Islamic radicalism in Indonesia,[218] but that is beating on the drum too soon. Radicals and radicalism will very likely keep being active parts of the Islamic discourse in future Indonesia, although some of the radical organizations we just kind of had got used to have vanished from the scene. In other words, Islamic radicalism is larger than the radical organizations, and radicals will probably soon form new organizations or find other ways to promote their cause.[219] The discussion above is thus still valid.

NEO-MODERNISM/LIBERAL ISLAM

At the other end of the spectrum of the contemporary Islamic discourse in Java we find individuals and organizations that may be said to be neo-modernist, or liberal, in their approach to Islam. Charles Kurzman popularized the term 'liberal Islam' by the end of the 1990s and suggested that Muslim liberals worldwide share some common themes, that is

> opposition to theocracy, support for democracy, guarantees of the rights of women and non-Muslims in Islamic countries, defense of freedom of thought, and belief in the potential for human progress.[220]

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[216] See for example *Pikiran Rakyat* 2002-10-17, *Kompas* 2002-10-17 and *ICMI* 2002-10-18. Naturally, the dissolution of the Jihad Militia need to be studied in detail in order to understand what mechanisms lay behind this drastic event. That falls outside the scope of this discussion, however.

[217] See for example *Kompas* 2002-11-07, *Suara Merdeka* 2002-11-07. Again, this event calls for further study. In August 2003, the leader of FPI, Habib Rizieq, was sentenced to seven months in jail, and was convicted for having caused social unrest (see *Media Indonesia*, 2003-08-11).

[218] Abdullah 2003.

[219] Timo Kivimäki (personal communication 2003-01-06).

[220] Kurzman 1998b: 4. See also Kurzman 1999.

In order to understand the particular Indonesian neo-modernism, some clipping from one of Greg Barton's writings may be helpful, in that he argues for five points to be made:

> The first point to note about neo-Modernism [in Indonesia] is that, unlike many Islamic movements, neo-Modernism can be said to be progressive. /.../ Secondly, neo-Modernism... is, in part, a response to modernity, and the globalising encroachment of Western civilization and culture on the Muslim world. /.../ Thirdly... neo-Modernist thought in Indonesia affirms the particular kind of secularism set forth in the Pancasila and in the Indonesian constitution, in which sectarian religious interests are kept separate from the interests of the state, separating, as it were, church and state. /.../ Fourthly, neo-Modernism presents an open, inclusivistic, liberal understanding of Islam, that is accepting, indeed affirming, of social pluralism and stresses the need for tolerance and harmony in inter-communal relations. Fifthly, neo-Modernism begins in the spirit of turn of the century modernism, picking up Muhammad 'Abduh's concern for rationality and for *ijtihād*, or individual endeavours in interpretation.[221]

The two most well-known Muslim neo-modernists in Indonesia are Nurcholish Madjid and Abdurrahman Wahid (popularly known as Cak Nur and Gus Dur respectively). Madjid (b. 1939)—who got his Ph.D. from the University of Chicago under Fazlur Rahman—was one of the instigators of the *pembaruan pemikiran Islam* (I., renewal of Islamic thought) movement in Indonesia, and made great headlines when he in 1970 argued for secularization and desacralization, and presented his now famous cry of "Islam yes! Islamic parties, no!" He is today a prolific writer, active commentator on current affairs, and head of the Paramadina Foundation in Jakarta. Wahid (b. 1940), on the other hand, grew up in a family of traditionalists—his grandfather KH Hasyim Ashari being one of the founders of NU—and pursued his higher education in Cairo and Baghdad. In 1984 he was elected general chairman of the traditionalist NU, and in 1999 he was installed as the fourth president of the Republic of Indonesia, only to be impeached and replaced by Megawati Soekarnoputri in 2001. Much scholarly attention (Western and Indonesian) has been paid these two influential characters, and there is nothing that needs to be reiterated here.[222] I will instead focus on a new think-tank-*cum*-organization called *Jaringan Islam Liberal* (JIL), or the Network for Liberal Islam, that so far has been insufficiently studied.

The Network for Liberal Islam was established in early 2001 by a group of young intellectuals in Jakarta as a response to what they considered to be a worrying resurgence of Islamic extremism and fundamentalism ('radicalism' in the present language usage) in Indonesia.[223] In contrast to earlier liberals—

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[221] Barton 1997: 66f.

[222] The interested reader is first and foremost referred to Barton 1997 and his list of references (which includes some of Madjid's and Wahid's writings). For a study of Nurcholish Madjid, see Kull, forthcoming (2005). See also Woodward 1996a and Liddle 1996b.

[223] *Jaringan Islam Liberal* 2002. (Note that this document is no longer available on the JIL homepage.)

such as the two mentioned above—, the JIL members are more straightforward in defining the opponents, and one of the Network's most prominent propagators, Ulil Abshar-Abdalla, forthrightly mentions *Front Pembela Islam, Laskar Jihad* and *Partai Keadilan* as their rivals.[224] In order to counter the influences of these groups, the JIL perceived the need for a 'militant campaign' (note the vocabulary) that could spread and develop an open, pluralistic, inclusive and humane view of Islam.[225] And this campaign has taken the form of short articles in the daily press, a radio talk show, the publication of small booklets, TV commercials, and a colorful website.[226]

On the JIL homepage, liberal Islam is defined as having the following six concerns: the opening up of the doors of *ijtihad* in all sectors, an emphasis on religious ethics (as opposed to textual literalism), an understanding of the relativity of truth (as opposed to absolutism), a defense of oppressed minorities, the need for religious freedom, and the separation of religion and politics.[227] The endeavor to engage in *ijtihad* in all sectors should here be understood as encompassing questions concerning both *ilahiyyat* (I., A. *al-ilāhīyāt*, theology), *ubudiyyat* (I., ritual, A. *al-ubūdīyāt*) and *muamalat (*I., social interaction, A. *al-muᶜāmalāt*), since *ijtihad* is the foremost principle (I. *prinsip utama*) that renders possible Islam's survival 'in all weathers.' In the course of *ijtihad* the JIL emphasizes the spirit of the religious ethics of the Koran and the *sunnah* (since a literal interpretation only will "kill" Islam), and also the relativity of truth, since any interpretation of the revelation is the act of (possibly fallible) humans. In their defense of minorities, the JIL members understand minorities in a broad sense and thus include religious, ethnic, cultural, political, and economical minorities, and in the same spirit back up questions of gender equality and deviant sexual orientation. Finally, the JIL argues for religious freedom, since being religious (I. *beragama*) or not (I. *tidak beragama*) is a personal question. And from this last argument comes the perceived need of separating the religious authority from the political; religion may be a source of inspiration for the public policy, but may not be equipped with any transcendental privilege (I. *privelese transedental*).[228] We notice two things. First, that the definition of liberal Islam is presented in an antagonistic tone; it is clear that it is directed towards Islamic radicalism, and it is especially interesting in that it actually conveys the general liberal picture of radicals in Indonesia, as somewhat backward adherents of literalism that oppress minorities and argue for state implementation of Islamic law. Secondly, we also notice that questions that have made it into the agendas of modernists (and others) here are driven to their edges. Many of the concerns proposed by JIL has been touched upon by other groups (modernists, primar-

[224] *Gatra Online* 2001-12-02.
[225] *Jaringan Islam Liberal* 2002. (Note that this document is no longer available on the JIL homepage.)
[226] [http://www.islamlib.com]
[227] *Jaringan Islam Liberal* 2003.
[228] *Jaringan Islam Liberal* 2003.

ily) but never taken that far. To open up for *ijtihad* in ritual matters is, for example, unthinkable for many modernists (as it probably would result in negative *bid'ah*, innovation), as is the question of sexual deviation.

To proceed, the stated mission of *Jaringan Islam Liberal* is to:

> 1. Develop liberal interpretations of Islam in accordance to the principles we [JIL] follow, and to spread them to the general public;
> 2. Strive for [the establishment of] open dialogues free from the pressures of conservatism. It is only with the availability of such open dialogues that the development of Islamic thought and action can proceed healthy; and
> 3. Strive for the establishment of social and political structures that are humane and fair. We believe that democracy is one of the systems "at this time" [citation in original] that can fulfil that need. As for capitalism, we believe there are some policies worthy of support [in it], but that there also are aspects within it to be criticized.[229]

Not surprisingly, the Network and its members has been the subject of both severe criticism and threats,[230] and there is here only room to shortly discuss one of the questions that have caused debate.

In the middle of November 2002, a couple of weeks into the fasting month of Ramadan, the daily *Kompas* featured a short article that was to become an instigator for heated debate among Muslims all over the archipelago. This seemingly modest article, written by the NU affiliated Ulil Abshar-Abdalla, was entitled *Menyegarkan Kembali Pemahaman Islam*, or Revitalizing our Understanding of Islam.[231] In it, the author launches several very liberal and anti-conservative ideas, something that led his father-in-law, A. Mustofa Bisri, to publicly criticize him in a subsequent article in the same paper,[232] and several Javanese *ulama*—organized in the *Forum Ulama Umat Indonesia*—to issue a *fatwa* calling for the author's death sentence.[233] I will here not concern myself with the aftermath of the article—including death sentences, reports to the police, accusations of blasphemy, alleged humiliation of the Muslim community, defending press releases, etc.—but rather on some sections of the writing itself.

The most severe criticism in the article is directed towards whoever wants to implement Islamic law in Indonesia (and it is naturally also this point that has aroused feelings in the community of believers). Abshar-Abdalla goes right to the point: "The effort of implementing Islamic law, according to me, is a form of the helplessness [I. *ketidakberdayaan*] felt by the Muslim community in its attempts to face and solve its problems more

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[229] *Jaringan Islam Liberal* 2003.

[230] See for example *Suara Hidayatullah* January 2002, February 2002a, February 2002b, *Al Islam* 2002a, 2002b. To counter the popular JIL mailing group (at Yahoo!), there are also several 'anti-liberal' dittos.

[231] Abshar-Abdalla 2002.

[232] Bisri 2002a.

[233] E.g. *Tempo Interaktif* n.d., *Gatra Online* 2002-12-17, 2003-01-14.

rationally." Indeed, the proposition that "the implementation of Islamic law constitutes the solution for all problems [faced by the community] is a form of intellectual laziness [I. *kemalasan berpikir*]," all the more so since there, according to the writer, actually is no such thing as an Islamic law. Naturally, words such as these aroused the radicals, but even modernists and traditionalists have reacted with hesitation, and not few have felt humiliated and even 'disgusted,' as a friend of mine put it. Even though far from all Indonesian Muslims are interested in enforcing *syariat* (I., Islamic law, A. *sharīᶜah*), most are convinced that there in Islam exists something that at least resembles a 'law,' and that Islam encompasses all aspects of life. Moreover, as a consequence of this perceived law having divine origin and being of divine nature, it is generally thought of as infallible. A young intellectual saying that resting upon this divinely law is a form of "escapism" widespread in the Muslim community, can give even liberal Muslims *kebakaran jenggot*, or 'burning beards,' to use yet a popular Indonesian saying.

In the view of Abshar-Abdalla, what people regard as Islamic law is actually only "a bunch of values" (I. *sehimpunan nilai-nilai pokok*) that needs to be reinterpreted (I. *ijtihad*) in every era and geographical location. Indonesian Muslims are in no need of Arabic culture, he argues, and states that the Islam of Muhammad in Medina was just *one* possible form of Islam; it was a "trade-off"[234] between universal and particular values. Wearing a veil—being an ever-disputed topic in Indonesia and elsewhere—is thus not obligatory for Indonesian Muslim females, since it is just an Arabic custom practiced at the time of the prophet. Muslims need only dress and behave in accordance with local standards of public decency (which, of course, is no static entity).

Inter-religious marriages (another topic fiercely debated in late 2002 Indonesia)[235] also receive the defense of Abshar-Abdalla, since the Koran in his view does not firmly ban such a practice.[236] The Holy Book of the Muslims, he continues, instead adheres to the "universal view that the status of human beings is profoundly equal, regardless of religious affiliation." And based on this principle of universal equality, "all law products of classical Islam that differentiate between Muslims and non-Muslims need to be amended."

Another part of the article that has engaged the public is that concerned with the status of Muhammad. Abshar-Abdalla acknowledges the general Muslim principle that the life of the prophet constitutes an example to be followed. But he simultaneously emphasizes that the figure of the prophet has to be regarded as a historical one and thus studied critically, in order not to endow him with mythic proportions, disregarding his human aspects and possible flaws. Furthermore, Muhammad and the Islam he presented in the

[234] The English term used in the original.
[235] Inter-religious marriages are not acknowledged by the Indonesian state.
[236] Cf. QS 2:221: "And do not marry women who ascribe divinity to aught beside God ere they attain to [true] belief..."

seventh century Arabian Peninsula was historical, particular and contextual. And these characteristics, as we saw above, make the Islamic expression of the prophet not automatically valid for all areas in all ages. Abshar-Abdalla also argues that the time of revelations (I. *wahyu*, A. *waḥy*) did not come to an end with the death of Muhammad: true, there are no verbal revelations anymore, but non-verbal variants still occur in the form of human *ijtihad.*

The last topic to be discussed here is that of Abshar-Abdalla's concept of religious pluralism, which his defense of inter-religious marriages already gave a hint about above. No interpretation of Islam can be regarded as true and absolute, and there has to be a readiness in the Muslim community to accept truth claims from outside Islam. Good values (I. *nilai kebaikan*) are not exclusive to Islam: it might even be that the truth of 'Islam' is to be found in Marxian philosophy.[237] It is content, not form, that is of importance, because the goal—that is, the submission of the self in front of the All-Mighty—is the same of all religions, and the Truth of God is greater than Islam. Thus, Abshar-Abdalla suggests that QS 3:19 should be interpreted as "Indeed, the true religious way is a *never-ending-process* approaching the submission (to God),"[238] and that all religions belong to the same extended family of lovers of that process.

In sum then, this article gives expression to all of the six concerns of the JIL presented above. It should be noted that the article is more 'radically' liberal than are many other JIL writings.[239] I have included it here since it highlights several points of interest, and since it probably is one of the most widely read and debated article in modern Indonesian (Islamic) history.

DEPARTEMEN AGAMA

There is very little written about the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs (I. *Departemen Agama*), both in Western languages and in Indonesian. Nevertheless, the ministry is an 'actor' that needs to be discussed shortly here, since it has a say in the performance of the month of fasting, and also is responsible for the publication of a popular translation of the Koran (to be discussed in a subsequent chapter).

The ministry was established after some discussion in early 1946 based on the principle of 'belief in a singular God' (I. *ketuhanan yang Maha Esa*)

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[237] There has since 1966 been an effective ban on communism in Indonesia, and everything with an alleged leftist leaning is regarded with extreme suspicion.

[238] In Indonesian: *Sesungguhnya jalan religiusitas yang benar adalah proses-yang-tak-pernah-selesai menuju ketundukan (kepada Yang Maha Benar).* A more conventional translation of this verse reads "Behold, the only [true] religion in the sight of God is [man's] self-surrender (*al-islām*) unto Him..."

[239] See the JIL homepage for other articles, or every Sunday edition of the daily *Jawa Pos.* Various e-groups or mailing lists in Indonesia have had lively discussions in the aftermath of the article.

as laid out in Article 29 of the 1945 Constitution.[240] It was only the Muslim portion of the population that argued for the establishment of the ministry—though even some Muslims too were suspicious of it—and the young government understood that the Muslim support such a ministry could yield would be vital for its survival.[241] Though primarily catering to the Muslim community, the ministry has as its goal to provide guiding and facilities for all religious groups in the country. Today the ministry consists of five groups: one for Islamic affairs, one special for the pilgrimage, one for Protestantism, one for Catholicism and, finally, one for Hinduism and Buddhism.[242] The head office of the ministry is situated in Jakarta, but there are *Kantor Urusan Agama* (I., KUA; Offices for Religious Affairs) to be found throughout the country. These, and the ministry itself, serve the Muslim community (and others) in questions concerning education, marriage, divorce, pilgrimage, ascertaining the religious holidays, etc. A Muslim couple who wants to marry, for example, will have to show up at the local KUA to register, whereupon the spouses-to-be are given a short lecture—and also some print material—concerning the joys and hardships of marriage. They are also told what rights (I. *hak*) and obligations (I. *kewajiban*) the different actors in an ideal Muslim marriage have, and are encouraged to study the material carefully. (Approximately the same advice and discussions are reprinted in the *buku nikah* (I.), a kind of passport new weds are given upon actual marriage.) Should the marriage still not work out—the couple is told—they can always come back to the office later for additional advice. The local KUA offices also provide staff for officiating at weddings.

The detailed aim of the Ministry has changed over time, but we can, following Noer, say that it has operated in three broad fields, namely those of education, information, and justice.[243] Although the *Departemen Agama* is in charge of some questions and issues of vital importance to the Muslim community, it has never tried to monopolize the affairs of the Muslim community.[244] The various Muslim organizations have instead continued to play vital and complementary roles in the Islamic landscape in Java. Thus, the date ascertained by the Ministry and its regional KUAs for the commencement of the fasting month, does not necessarily coincide with the date ascertained by other Muslim organizations. And Javanese Muslims are free to choose if they want to follow the recommendations of the government or those of some non-governmental organization.

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[240] Noer 1978: 8. The establishment of such a ministry was rejected on August 19 (1945) and issues concerning religion were directed to the Ministry of Education; see Boland 1982: 37.
[241] Noer 1978: 15.
[242] See the homepage of the Ministry of Religious Affairs [http://www.depag.net].
[243] See Noer 1978: 18f for a comparison of the 1949 and the 1969 aim of the Ministry.
[244] Federspiel 2001: 224.

The Indonesian Council of Islamic Scholars (MUI; *Majelis Ulama Indonesia*) was established in 1975, though there had been some prototypes in circulation already since the late 1950s.[245] This government-financed council, attracting religious scholars from different backgrounds, was established in order to provide both the government and the Muslim community with advice in questions touching upon Islamic issues. It should further strengthen national security, increase religious harmony, and assist the regime in its development programs.[246] It was thus to lend legitimacy to the government, a practice that occasionally has attracted criticism. In 1988, for example, MUI leaders sided with the (Soeharto) government over a dispute concerning alleged pig-oil extracts in some canned foods and milk powder, and even appeared in national TV feasting on the accused products.[247] The *Majelis* has not always, however, sided with the government.[248]

The Council sees itself as having five major roles.[249] First, it is to be regarded as if it had inherited the tasks of the prophets (I. *pewaris tugas-tugas para nabi*), and as such it holds a 'prophetic function.' In this function, MUI strives for uniformity between the Islamic ideals and the social reality, and struggles to establish a daily life based on Islam. Secondly, MUI is a producer of *fatwa* (I., legal opinions concerning Islamic law). These *fatwa* are at times asked for by the Muslim community, and at times issued on the initiative of the Council itself. As can be seen on the MUI homepage, these legal opinions cover topics from the use of medicines postponing menstruation to opinions concerning Shī^{c}ism and Muslims celebrating Christmas (!).[250] Third, the Council regards itself as an adviser to- and servant of the Muslim community (I. *pembimbing dan pelayan umat*). As such it always puts the interest of the wider community in the front line, and tries to fulfil the hopes, aspirations, and demands of the *umat*. Fourth, MUI is a movement working for the purification and renewal of Islam (I. *gerakan islah wa al tajdid*). Finally, it is said to follow the ideal of commanding what is good and prohibiting what is evil (I. *penegak amar makruf dan nahyi munkar*). As such, MUI is a moral force ready to engage in social rehabilitation.[251] Apart from these five roles, MUI also acknowledges the importance of brotherhood (I. *ukhuwah*), reciprocity (I. *ta'awun*), and tolerance (I. *tasamuh*), and

[245] Noer 1978: 65ff.
[246] Porter 2002: 78f.
[247] Porter 2002: 79.
[248] Chandra 1998: 196, Porter 2002: 80.
[249] *Majelis Ulama Indonesia* 2003a.
[250] *Majelis Ulama Indonesia* 2003c.
[251] *Majelis Ulama Indonesia* 2003a.

stresses the importance of equality (I. *almusawah*), justice (I. *al-adalah*) and democracy (I. *syura*).[252] [253]

BLURRING THE LINES

As I stated in the introduction to this section, we should approach the Islamic landscape in Java with caution in two respects. Firstly, we must remember that all the different actors discussed here share some common basics—namely those that make them Muslim—, and that it is all too easy for an outsider to focus on their differences at the expense of their similarities. Secondly, we should also be receptive to the fact that there is an extensive overlapping going on between these actors, and note that this overlapping has two sides: one individual, and one 'actoral.' The first of these takes the form of individual Javanese Muslims being simultaneously attracted to more than one actor in the Islamic landscape, whereas the second refers to the fact that the different actors indeed have some natural and substantial areas of overlapping. As an example—in addition to the ones referred to above—of the first overlapping, mention could here be made of one of my (female) student friends. She was an Islamic activist involved in a radical-inclined student organization, ever ready to join anti-West demonstrations, and a firm believer in a Jewish-American conspiracy to destroy Islam from within. At the same time she acknowledged her attraction to Sufism, and read extensively in the matter in the evenings to "calm down her heart" (I. *menenangkan hati*). The other overlapping can be exemplified by the fact that both modernists and radicals—in general—emphasize the importance of *ijtihad*, or by the fact that both traditionalists and neo-modernists are prone to underline the weight of ethics, morals and harmonious inter-religious relationships. We should also acknowledge the existence of various "cultural brokers"[254] in contemporary Indonesia that have sprung up due to an "intellectual cross-fertilization."[255] These cultural brokers—best exemplified by Abdurrahman Wahid, Nurcholish Madjid, and now recently Ulil Abshar-Abdalla—, together with Sufism, have been instrumental in the rapprochement between modernists and traditionalists, and there are now signs of an overcoming of the division between just these two groups, which still are the two largest in Java.[256] In the words of Abdillah:

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[252] *Majelis Ulama Indonesia* 2003b. Note the constant use of Indonesianized Arabic. In good Indonesian organizational order, the Council also has 'goals' and 'efforts' (*Majelis Ulama Indonesia* 2003d), and 'orientations' (*Majelis Ulama Indonesia* 2003e).
[253] Here the giant parenthesis ends.
[254] Barton 1997: 64. Note that the "cultural brokers" here differ slightly from those described elsewhere in this work.
[255] Howell *et al.* 1998: 279.
[256] Cederroth 1995: 273, Chandra 1995: 191, Howell 2001: 710.

> ...current Islamic legal thought tends to integrate these two types [modernist and traditionalist]. There is a greater awareness among the respective members and the recognition of the necessity for tolerance and the avoiding of conflict among Muslims over non-principal matters. Moreover, the traditionalist group has also realized the necessity of *tajdīd* (renewal) or reinterpretation of Islamic doctrines, while the modernist group has also realized the necessity of familiarizing itself with classical Islamic thought. Thus, *today a pure traditionalist or pure modernist group no longer exists*.[257]

This is taking the argument to its limit (or even transgressing that limit), but there are reasons to pay attention to the rapprochement between Muslim modernists and traditionalists in Java. In 1993, the two organizations of Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah—representing these two orientations—arranged a joint national seminar in Yogyakarta, in which hope was expressed for future co-operation and peaceful relations between the two.[258] In the presidential election of 1999, there were also signs of an overcoming of the division between modernists and traditionalists, in that many modernists voted for the traditionalist Wahid (partly in order to deprive Megawati of the presidential chair). Good as this may be, we should note that this is the 'official' view of the two organizations as proposed by organizational leaders and *ulama*. At the grass root level among ordinary Muslims, disputes and disagreements between modernists and traditionalists are still heard of. This does not mean, however, that we should uncritically embrace the proposed magnitude of the problems and the'nasty overtones,' 'slandering,' and 'mutual criticism' they allegedly give birth to. There is in fact much cooperation and mutual understanding between modernists and traditionalists in Java today.

PREVIOUS RESEARCH: A PARTIAL DISCUSSION

Some works that have as their primary object the religious life of the Javanese, have already been mentioned above. In order to delineate the different academic approaches to—and understandings of—Javanese Islam, we will now turn our attention to a more thorough discussion of some of these. What follows is thus an examination of some of the more influential writings on the subject, and we will discern two major—and rather contrasting—understandings of our subject: one neglecting the Islamic influence upon Javanese culture, the other emphasizing its decisive importance. To dilate upon all (major) works that has a say on the nature of Javanese religion would be too ambitious a project, and, indeed, out of place in the present context. Instead, I will discuss some works that may be said to represent larger trends in the research. Further, I will focus on the post-independence

[257] Abdillah 1998: 7. My italics.
[258] See Chandra 1998: 191.

period, and not indulge myself in questions pertaining to Dutch colonial scholarship, which had its specific aims and methods.[259] Naturally, works not included in the discussion below are referred to in other connections throughout the thesis, and the reader can from those references get a richer and more balanced understanding of the previous research, without them being specifically commented upon here.

NEGLECTING THE ISLAMIC INFLUENCE: CLIFFORD GEERTZ

The Religion of Java

There is probably not one single work on the religious or cultural life of the Javanese published after 1960, that does not comment and build upon Clifford Geertz's theories, ideas and conclusions, as presented in his now classic *The Religion of Java*.[260] Based on ethnographic fieldwork in east Java in the 1950s, this work has tremendously influenced subsequent research, and continues to be cited to this day. I will here let it represent those works that have denied—or, at least, largely denied—Islam's place in the religious life of the Javanese. The idea held by Geertz that the Javanese religious life owed its existence less to Islam than to something else was nothing new at the time, but rather a continuation of previous research. To van Leur, for example, Islam in Indonesia constituted nothing but a "thin, easily flaking glaze on the massive body of indigenous civilization,"[261] and it was something of a truism of the day—following colonial scholarship—that to be 'real Javanese' was something quite different from being a 'real Muslim.'[262]

Geertz proposed a triadic view of the Javanese religious life, and presented a scheme consisting of the groups of *abangan, santri*, and *priyayi* (J.). The first of these represents the "basic Javanese syncretism which is the island's true folk tradition [and] the basic substratum of its civilization." As such, this subvariant is a mix of animism, Hinduism and Islam, and hosts an "extensive and intricate" complex of spirit beliefs and theories of magic, curing and sorcery. Geertz situated the *abangan* variant of the Javanese religion first and foremost in the lives of the Javanese peasants, but carefully noted that his proposed categories were not to be thought of as watertight. *Abangan* belief and practices could thus be found in towns and cities, as well. The second variant was represented by those individuals belonging to a 'purer Islam,' who consequently emphasized the importance of the five pillars of Islam, and engaged themselves in explicitly Islamic political and social organizations. This group—the *santri* in the Geertzian typology—was

[259] Interested readers are referred to Benda 1985, Bowen 1995, Woodward 1996b.
[260] Geertz 1960. For a discussion of Geertz's other works, see King & Wilder 2003: 78ff.
[261] van Leur 1955: 169.
[262] See Woodward 1996b: 33.

primary linked to the traders in the towns and cities of Java, although an extensive *santri* community also existed in the villages, i.e. in the *pesantren*. The third and final subvariant of Javanese religion was called *priyayi* in Geertz's tripartite scheme, and represented a stress on Hindu-mystical aspects in their religious life. This white-collar elite was connected to the bureaucratic elements of Javanese society, and largely neglected the Muslim duties.[263]

Geertz opens up his discussion of the *abangan* with the assertion that "[a]t the center of the whole Javanese religious system lies a simple, formal, undramatic, almost furtive, little ritual: the *slametan*."[264] Much of his elaboration upon the *abangan* variant is thus centered around this communal meal, with one additional chapter on spirit beliefs, and one chapter on curing, sorcery, and magic. Though the content and form of these *slametan* may vary according to occasion, some parts of the ritual, according to Geertz, are inevitably present, including the burning of incense, Islamic chanting, and the high-Javanese speech of the host. The ritual is thought to minimize tension and conflict in society—with varying degree of success, however—, and equips members of it with a feeling of togetherness and equality. Apart from this, the *slametan* also calms down local spirits, who will thus not bother the *slametan* participants. In the words of one of Geertz's informants: "At a *slametan* all kinds of invisible beings come and sit with us and they also eat the food."[265] Almost as a response to some of Geertz's later critics, the informant added that "[t]hat is why the food and not the prayer is the heart of the *slametan*." In other words, that is why the *slametan* is truly Javanese, as opposed to Islamic.

As observed by Geertz, Javanese can throw a *slametan* at almost any occasion: at life crises, at Islamic holidays, at occasions centering upon the social integration of the village, and at more unusual and irregular occasions. Most of these different *slametan* are discussed in some length by Geertz—and these discussions provide interesting reading—who also draws attention to the importance of timing the rituals according to the Javanese numerological system (J. *petungan*).[266] Described are thus *slametan* that are held in connection with birth (J. *tingkeban, babaran, pasaran, pitonan*), circumcision (J. *sunatan*), marriage (J. *kepanggihan*), and death (J. *layatan*), as are those *slametan* connected to Islamic holidays, village integration (J. *bersih desa*), and extraordinary occasions. In this discussion there is a strong emphasis on the various life crises *slametan*, whereas those related to Islamic celebrations only qualify for brief mention.

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[263] Geertz 1960: 5-7. The *priyayi* will not be discussed here since, as has been observed, they represent a social class rather than religious affiliation. There are thus both *abangan* and *santri* who are to be denoted as *priyayi*, and the tripartite division seems a bit odd in this respect.
[264] Geertz 1960: 11. We will have reasons to return to the *slametan* later in this thesis.
[265] Geertz 1960: 15. (Geertz's work is frequently punctuated by edited field notes like the one quoted above.)
[266] Geertz 1960: 30ff.

The description of the *abangan* variant, as mentioned above, also includes discussions of the Javanese spirit belief, and of Javanese notions of curing, sorcery, and magic. Geertz discerns several different types of spirits: the frightening but harmless (J. *memedi*), the possessing and dangerous (J. *lelembut*), and the familiar and helpful (J. *tuyul*). In addition, there are also the potentially harmful place spirits (J. *demit*), and the helpful guardians (J. *danyang*),[267] and all together, these spirits provide the *abangan* Javanese with "a set of ready-made answers to the questions posed by puzzling experiences."[268] In close association with these spirit beliefs are the Javanese theories of curing, sorcery and magic, and pivotal in this respect are the *dukun* (J., traditional healer and ceremonial specialist), of which there are several different kinds: the *dukun bayi* (J., midwife), the *dukun temanten* (J., wedding specialist), and the *dukun tiban* (J., possessed curers), to mention just a few.[269] Their curing techniques and theories of disease, together with the Javanese usage of magic, drugs, and Western medicine are all topics that attracted the interest of Geertz, and underlying his discussion is an obvious assumption that the truly Javanese religious life is quite distinct from its Islamic counterpart.

The *santri* variant, on the other hand, represents the Javanese "true Moslems." In contrast to the *abangan* and their fascination with ritual detail, the *santri* put an immense emphasis on doctrinal issues: "[i]t is not the knowledge of ritual detail or spiritual discipline which is important, but the application of Islamic doctrine to life," writes Geertz.[270] Two types of 'real' Muslims are singled out: the *moderen* (J., modern, modernist) and the *kolot* (J., traditional, traditionalist), though the former are thought of being closer to Islamic orthodoxy than the latter. In characterizing these two groups inner relationship, Geertz proposes five pairs of opposition (in the form traditionalism *vs.* modernism): fate *vs.* self-determination, totalistic *vs.* narrowed religion, syncretic *vs.* puristic Islam, religious experience *vs.* religious behavior, and custom and scholasticism *vs.* pragmatism and rationalism.[271] In these oppositions, Geertz argues that the traditional or *kolot* strand of the *santri* variant comes close to the *abangan* worldview.[272] (As is customary in studies of Javanese religiosity, the modern and traditional variants of Islam are represented by Muhammadiyah, and to some extent Masyumi, and Nahdlatul Ulama respectively.)

Whereas the *abangan* ritual life was depicted in great detail, only two *santri* rituals are briefly mentioned in Geertz's account, namely that of ritual prayer (I. *sholat*) and fasting during Ramadan. He specifically mentions the

[267] Geertz 1960: 16-28.
[268] Geertz 1960: 28.
[269] Geertz 1960: 86.
[270] Geertz 1960: 127.
[271] Geertz 1960: 150-159. This is an interesting way of comparing traditionalists and modernists. However, the lines of demarcation are not as distinct as Geertz seems to suggest.
[272] Geertz 1960: 160.

Friday service (and gives a rather uninformed account of it),[273] and the practice of performing additional *sholat* during Ramadan (J. *traweh*) and of reciting the Koran (J. *darus*) during this month. But that is all. There is not a word on the three other pillars of Islam (the confession of faith, alms-giving, and pilgrimage), or other non-modernist Muslim rituals such as *dzikir, ziarah,* and *mulud* (J. celebrations of the Prophet's birthday, I. *mawlud*, A. *mawlid*), or more standard rituals such as *wudhu* (I., ritual ablution, A. *wuḍūʾ*) and Koranic recitation outside Ramadan.

Reception and criticism

The reception of Geertz's work on the religious life of the Javanese has been one of both acceptance and rejection. Those accepting the triadic scheme and its implications have generally uncritically applied the Geertzian division to their material—or unsubstantially altered it—and applauded its applicability, not taking the matter any further. (The *santri-abangan* division has been applied to virtually all aspects of Javanese life, not only the religious.) The rejecting or criticizing group, on the other hand, has noted its inapplicability, pondered upon its legitimacy, and finally embarked upon a journey in which creating something that may be regarded as a new attitude or perspective in studies of Javanese religiosity was the final goal. (More on this below.)

As mentioned in passing above, criticism has been directed towards the different variants in Geertz's scheme. It has been argued, quite correctly it seems, that the *santri-abangan-priyayi* distinction is inadequate in that *santri* and *abangan* represent religious affiliation, whereas *priyayi* denotes a social class, i.e., the nobility.[274] Thus, there are *priyayi* Javanese belonging to both the *abangan* tradition and the *santri* equivalent. Attention has also been drawn to the fact that the very term *abangan* bears rather pejorative connotations in Java,[275] and that it in the form *wong abangan,* 'the red people,' has been put in contrast to the *wong putihan,* 'the white people.'[276]

More severe criticism has, however, been directed towards Geertz's basic understanding of (Javanese) Islam. Thus, commenting upon *The Religion of Java,* the acknowledged scholar Marshall Hodgson noted that:

> Unfortunately, [*The Religion of Java*'s] general high excellence is marred by a major systematic error: influenced by the polemics of a certain school of modern sharīʿah-minded Muslims, Geertz identifies 'Islam' only with what that school of modernists happens to approve, and ascribes everything else to an aboriginal or a Hindu-Buddhist background, gratuitously labelling much of the Muslim religious life in Java 'Hindu.' He identifies a long series of phenomena, virtually universal to Islam and sometimes found even in the Qurʾān itself, as un-Islamic; and hence his interpretation of the Islamic past as well as of some recent anti-Islamic reactions is

[273] Geertz 1960: 218f.
[274] E.g., Emmerson 1976: 23f.
[275] Koentjaraningrat 1985a: 292, n. 1.
[276] Bachtiar 1985: 278. The *wong putihan* were called so due to their white dresses.

> highly misleading. [...] For one who knows Islam, his comprehensive data—despite his intention—show how very little has survived from the Hindu past even in inner Java and raises the question of why the triumph of Islam was so complete.[277]

Much of the criticism directed towards Geertz and his analysis has built upon the fact that he seems to have been heavily influenced by his modernist informants who, with their 'puritan' interpretation of Islam, sought to rid Javanese Islam of its allegedly non-, pre- or extra-Islamic beliefs and practices. Geertz thus let modernists define 'Islam' and 'Muslim' and consequently came to regard many Javanese institutions as belonging more to indigenous tradition, or perhaps to a Hindu-Buddhist past, than to Islam. In other words, much of that labeled *abangan* by Geertz would be interpreted in an Islamic frame of reference by many Sufi, neo-modernist, and traditionalist Javanese Muslims, whereas *The Religion of Java* perhaps would be read as a modernist apologetic text. This state of affairs has aptly been referred to as a "modernist prejudice,"[278] which has haunted the Western—and, to some extent, even the Javanese—understanding of Islam in Java.

EMPHASIS ON THE ISLAMIC CHARACTER: A NEW PERSPECTIVE

Since the mid-1980s, a new perspective in regard to Islam in Java has taken form. Largely critical of Geertz and his supporters, scholars active in the formation of this perspective have accentuated the Islamic character of Javanese religious life, and questioned the legitimacy of previous scholarly suppositions.[279] In 1985, Roff argued that there so far had been a seemingly "extraordinary desire [...] to diminish, conceptually, the place and role of the religion and culture of Islam, now and in the past, in Southeast Asian societies."[280] A decade later, Hefner similarly noted that "Islam's influence on Southeast Asian society has been severely underestimated,"[281] and elaborated upon the "dual marginalization" he thought Islam in Southeast Asia had been the subject of. On the one hand, he argued, scholars of Islam had first and foremost directed their attention to the 'classical' Islamic civilizations of the Arabic- and Persian-speaking areas of the world, and—at the expense of everyday Muslim life—focused on the high culture of Islam. In this field, there had thus been a strong textual emphasis together with a legalistic understanding of Islam, which held low in esteem contemporary anthropological or sociological understandings of Islam. On the other hand, Islam had also been

[277] Hodgson 1974: 551, n. 2.
[278] Barton 1997: 37.
[279] Note that there were similar attempts—pioneered by Drewes and Johns—already in the 1960s. At this time, however, their influence remained limited, overshadowed as it was by that of Geertz's.
[280] Roff 1985a: 7.
[281] Hefner 1997a: 5.

marginalized in the field of Southeast Asian studies, where it had been regarded as anathema to the 'real' Southeast Asia. This latter phenomenon was, in fact, largely a continuation of colonial attitudes and scholarship.[282]

Mark Woodward

In discussing this new approach to Islam in Java, I will here largely confine myself to the work of one specific scholar—who can be said to represent this trend or inclination—and only briefly mention some other who also belong to this school. The chosen scholar is Mark Woodward, whose monograph *Islam in Java: Normative Piety and Mysticism in the Sultanate of Yogyakarta* seriously questioned Geertz's framework.[283] Instead of examining Javanese religiosity in terms of orthodox Islam versus syncretism, Woodward suggests that we understand the different Javanese approaches to religion as one influenced to various degrees by legalist contra mystical interpretations of Islam. He consequently introduces the 'variants' of normative Islam (or normative piety) and the mystically-inclined *Islam Jawa* (Javanese Islam), and argues in a general tone that "Islam is the predominant force in the religious beliefs and rites of central Javanese," and that it as such "shapes the character of social interaction and daily life in all segments of Javanese society."[284] The question is thus not *if*, but rather *how*, the Javanese are Muslims. Some Javanese Muslims comply with the standard requirements of *sharīᶜah*-centered Islam, and thus perform ritual prayer, fast during Ramadan, pay the tithe, and simultaneously refrain from more popular forms of devotion. Those, according to Woodward, are the upholders of normative Islam in Java. The others, the more mystically inclined Javanese Muslims, only participate in certain aspects of the normative requirements of Islam, and argue that their spiritual development is not dependent upon the performance of normative rituals. Representing this mode of Muslim devotion are the court nobility and certain layers of the village population, who, however, are dependent upon *santri* performances of normative Islam. Islam in Java is thus communicating a schism that other Muslim societies to a large degree also host, i.e., a schism between legally-oriented Muslims on the one hand, and their mystically-oriented brothers and sisters on the other. As such, it is a schism between Sufism and *sharīᶜah*-centered Islam. It would be a mistake, according to Woodward, to assume that the latter represents orthodoxy: "there is little support for the position that the *sharīᶜah* represents the 'true' or 'original' Islam."[285] Both Sufism and more normative Islam are thus purely "Islamic" traditions—it is their respective ways to participate in Islam that differ. (Of

[282] Hefner 1997a: 8-18. See also chapter one above.
[283] Woodward 1989. This is an insignificantly altered version of his Ph.D.-thesis entitled *The Shari'ah and the Secret Doctrine: Muslim Law and Mystical Doctrine in Central Java* (University of Illinois, 1985).
[284] Woodward 1989: 3.
[285] Woodward 1989: 63.

course, more radical Sufi interpretations would perhaps best be situated outside 'orthodox' Islam.)

Woodward answers Hodgson's question of why the triumph of Islam was so complete in Java, by drawing attention to the fact that the royal courts embraced Islam as the basis for a theocratic state.[286] The nobility, however, were adherents of *Islam Jawa* and only partially engaged themselves in the normative rituals, which, on the other hand, the *santri* upheld. In line with Hodgson, Woodward also traces several practices usually defined as animist or Hindu-Buddhist to have Muslim roots. Interestingly, he sees the by Geertz extensively discussed *slametan* in the light of Islamic doctrine, and has devoted a separate article to the issue.[287] In that article he argues that the *slametan* is a locally defined Muslim ritual, which has its roots in Muslim "essentialist texts including the Qur'an and Hadith." Moreover, as far as there are any pre-Islamic traditions left in the *slametan*, they are interpreted in Islamic terms, whereas the religious and social goals of the ritual are explained in terms of Islamic mystical theory.[288] Thus, Woodward sees that ritual meals exist in non-Javanese Muslim cultures, and sets out to find its textual roots. He finds support in both *aḥādīth* (in stories of the Prophet taking part in communal meals and ordering the distribution of the food) and the Koran (in connection with the obligation to feed the needy, and show kindness to neighbors), and argues that the very term *slamet* (J., tranquility, which is the goal of a *slametan*) is directly derived from the (mystical) Arabic term *salām*. For virtually every part of the Javanese *slametan*, Woodward succeeds in establishing larger Muslim origins, and concludes that "the *slametan* [...] is Islamic, not animistic," something which requires us to "abandon the view that Java is trivially Muslim."[289]

Reception and criticism

In the quarters of Geertz's supporters, Woodward's arguments and theories have been largely ignored, and many studies of religion in Java keep citing Geertz in apparent full agreement. On the other hand, a new school of scholars with many concerns and ideas similar to those of Woodward's has seen daylight, and this school is becoming increasingly influential.[290] Interestingly, this new approach has been welcomed by Javanese scholars, who have gladly participated in the efforts to define Javanese religion in Islamic terms.[291] A

[286] Woodward 1989: 3, 149ff.
[287] Woodward 1988.
[288] Woodward 1988: 54f.
[289] Woodward 1988: 83.
[290] Note that Woodward should not be regarded as the sole instigator of this new approach to Javanese Islam; he is but one of the driving forces behind it and here represents a larger trend. Among the scholars who also belongs to this tradition, we can mention Bowen (1993, 1995, 1997), Hefner (1985, 1997a), Riddell (2001) and Roff (1985a).
[291] See for example Hilmy (1998), Madjid (1994), Muhaimin (1996), Mujani (2003) and Saleh (2001).

large survey of the Indonesian religious landscape conducted by the Center for the Study of Islam and Society (PPIM, *Pusat Pengkajian Islam dan Masyarakat*) in both 2001 and 2002, confirmed the Woodwardian standpoint, and emphasized the inapplicability of the Geertzian scheme in contemporary Indonesia.[292] This national survey, which to a large extent is the basis of Saiful Mujani's interesting dissertation,[293] showed that more than 80 percent of the Indonesian Muslims could be called *santri* (in that they performed ritual prayer, fasted during Ramadan, and performed other prescribed Islamic rituals), whereas less than five percent fitted Geertz's category of *abangan* with its specific rituals. The remaining fifteen percent of the population were shown to be people who—though regarding themselves as Muslims—neither engaged themselves in the *santri* rituals, nor the *abangan* equivalents. The overall point to be made was that Indonesian Muslims are growing more and more *santri*, and that Indonesian contemporary Islam cannot be accurately studied in terms of the dichotomy of *santri* and *abangan*, since only a small portion of the population adheres to the latter tradition.[294] In the words of Hefner, "[t]he children of many '*abangan*' are becoming good Muslims."[295] Or, put slightly different by Mujani, the "older abangan thesis of 1950s anthropology is not verified by the results of today's surveys.[296]

In Java, as elsewhere, the focus in studies of Muslim society has lately been not on the ritual, doctrinal, or otherwise 'religious' aspects of Islam, but rather on the political potentials of its adherents. As such, much recent research is not of immediate concern to us here. Mention should, however, be made of Andrew Beatty's *Varieties of Javanese Religion: An Anthropological Account*.[297] A quick look at the front cover immediately tells us what this book is all about: there is a picture of elderly rural Javanese celebrating a *slametan* at the upper half of the cover, underneath which is the Geertz-inspired title. Indeed, Beatty is largely influenced by *The Religion of Java*, and presents his data in a similar fashion as Geertz did. However, Beatty conceives "of the variant forms in rather different terms [as compared to Geertz] – more relationally, less identified with particular groups, and in a single social context quite unlike the disparate, semi-urban setting of Geertz's fieldwork."[298] Consequently, he does not connect the *slametan* specifically to the *abangan* tradition, but rather argues that this ritual belongs to all three variants of Javanese society.[299] Beatty is critical of both Woodward and

[292] *Republika*, 2002-10-10. Cf. Mulkhan 2002a and Burhanuddin 2002.
[293] Mujani 2003.
[294] Interestingly, the survey stuck to the terms *santri* and *abangan*.
[295] Hefner 1987: 547.
[296] Mujani 2003: 126. Indeed, the survey's outcomes "tend to reject Geertz's claim" (2003: 104).
[297] Beatty 1999. See also Beatty 1996.
[298] Beatty 1999: 10.
[299] Beatty 1999: 30. Hilmy (1998: 21) has also argued that the *slametan* constitutes a "theological bridge" between *santri* and *abangan*, and noted that it is not a specifically *abangan* ritual (cf. Bowen 1993: 229f). Indeed, he argued that it is not "empirically valid" to speak of the *slametan*

Geertz (for different reasons), and is more interested than his two predecessors were in the interaction of various "actors" in Javanese society. Reading this book, one should keep in mind that it is based on fieldwork in the easternmost and one of the most enduring Hindu-Buddhist parts of Java—with Hindu Bali almost within sight—namely in rural Banyuwangi. Much of what is argued in this work thus seems to be specific to this region.

as syncretic anymore (1998: 22). We will return to Beatty's discussion of the *slametan* in a later section.

CHAPTER THREE

NORMATIVE RAMADAN

THE KORAN, THE TRADITIONS, AND THE CONSENSUS OF THE SCHOLARS

The first part of this chapter is concerned with what is said about fasting (A. *ṣiyām*, *ṣawm*) in the text revealed to Muhammad in the seventh century CE, and in the corpus of texts that recorded the prophet's deeds and actions. Accordingly, it is divided into two major sections: one dealing with the Koran, the other one with parts of the vast *aḥādīth* (A., traditions, pl. of *ḥadīth*) literature. It should be noted initially that the views presented below to a large extent are the views of believing and practicing Muslims[1]—views that thus not necessarily are in tune with other (Western/secular/Christian/academic) perspectives. The obvious—though often neglected—reason to have it this way, is that the present thesis primarily is concerned with the position of Muslims themselves, and how they regard their religious beliefs and practices. Consequently, it is not of particular interest to us here whether or not a *ḥadīth* is to be deemed authentic—in the sense that it is historically and theologically possible and sound that Muhammad made the specific statement—or regarded as a later fabrication; rather will the focus be on whether or not Muslims regard them as valid statements of their prophet. The Koran is approached in a similar way.

The second part of the chapter gives a short introduction to the Koran and *aḥādīth* in a specific Javanese or Indonesian context, and to the attitudes of the different legal schools towards Ramadan. Because apart from being based on the Koran and the *aḥādīth*, the practice of fasting is also based on the consensus (A. *ijmāʾ*, I. *ijmak*) of the *ʿulamāʾ* (A., Muslim scholars, I.

[1] In this sense, the Koran *was* revealed to Muhammad in the seventh century—as argued in this chapter's first sentence, for example. Of course, differences of opinion among Muslims are all but uncommon, but we can at least say something on a *majority view* on largely undisputed topics here.

ulama)[2]—that is, all Muslim legal schools acknowledge the obligatory status of Ramadanic fasting within Islamic law. However, these legal schools differ slightly in their attitudes in relation to fasting during Ramadan, and it is some of these differences that will be discussed. The intent of this is twofold: firstly, to recapitulate and schematically summarize what has been said earlier in the chapter about fasting, and secondly, to point to the plurality of interpretations within the Islamic world.

I choose to include this material in my thesis with the expectation that later chapters, which more specifically deal with the Javanese situation, will make more sense. It is further my conviction that we need to acknowledge the dynamic relationship between the 'normative' and 'local' or 'lived' traditions in studies of Islam—especially in allegedly peripheral Muslim areas—, in order to fully grasp them both. This has already been discussed in previous chapters, however. It should be noted that I use the term 'normative' here, though aware of it being inherently problematic, in the sense most Javanese would think of a 'Muslim normativeness,' i.e., in the form of results from discussions of 'classical' and 'authoritative' Arabic texts. In this way, it could be said that what I argue for below is normative in a specific Javanese way, but I would be surprised if non-Javanese Muslims would find the basics of it non-normative. The chapter is, it is true, occasionally seasoned with some very local and occasionally non-normative Javanese examples, but the reason for this is not to exceed the normative and theoretical limits of it, but rather, bluntly, to keep it from being too dull reading. In this case, the reader's indulgence is hoped for.

THE KORAN

This section will deal with what is said about the practice of fasting—both Ramadanic and extra-Ramadanic—in the Koran.[3] A short introduction to the position of the Koran within the Islamic tradition will, however, precede that discussion, in order to endow the reader with an initial understanding of the importance of the Koran for Muslims around the world, as well as to contextualize the Book in a wider environment. Nevertheless, it needs to be emphasized that this is not meant to be an exhaustive account—indeed, not even an exhaustive introduction[4]—to the role the Koran holds within Islam; I will but make some, for us, interesting remarks.

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[2] See al-Jaziri 1995: 14 and al-Zuhayly 1995: 105.

[3] For a an introduction to what is said more generally in the Koran—and also in the *fiqh* (A. jurisprudence) literature—about regulations concerning food and drink, see Rodinson 1965 (especially the parts "Regulations Concerning Food in Early Islam" and "Post-Ḳurʾānic Religious Regulations") and Wensinck 1978.

[4] For a short, entertaining, and illuminating introduction to the Koran, see Cook 2000.

The magnitude of the Koran within the Islamic tradition can hardly be overestimated; its position has been said to be tantamount to that of Jesus' in Christianity,[5] and its nature to have become invested with a quasi-human personality.[6] Furthermore, it has been noted that Islam is the "most radical" of the three Abrahamic religions concerning the emphasis—ritual and theological—put on the written text, and that one can hardly imagine a religious tradition more "categorically focused" on its text than Islam.[7]

The Koran is by (most) Muslims appreciated as the word of God (A. *kalāmu llāh*), and thus an infallible divine manifestation containing eternal guidance (A. *hudan*) for the believers.[8] Some Koranic examples regarding its nature and purpose may be illuminative:

> Alif. Lām. Rā. A divine writ [is this – a revelation] which We have bestowed upon thee from on high in order that thou might bring forth all mankind, by their Sustainer's leave, out of the depths of darkness into the light: onto the way that leads to the Almighty, the One to whom all praise is due.[9]

> Thus, step by step, We bestow from on high through this Qurʾān all that gives health [to the spirit] and us a grace unto those who believe [in Us]...[10]

Furthermore, the Koran is given, amongst others, the following epithets in the text itself: mighty (A. *ʿaẓīm*), wise (A. *ḥakīm*), clear (A. *mubīn*), glorious (A. *majīd*), and noble (A. *karīm*).[11] It may seem like a circular way of reasoning, but the fact that the Koran praises itself in this way is one of its authority giving sources, and this is of course connected to the idea that it is thought of as God's words. Or, in Wagtendonk's words, the Koran "needs no further proofs but proves itself."[12] For a non-Muslim, this reasoning may hold little or no validity, but a Muslim would regard this as one of the ultimate proofs of the authenticity of their Book.

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[5] See for example Ayoub 1984: 11, Hanif 1995: 71, Welch 1986: 427, Wild 1996: 137.
[6] Ayoub 1984: 14, Ayoub 1987: 176.
[7] Graham 1987: 79ff. See also Adams 1987: 175. One should however bear in mind the importance of the written text among the contemporary Sikhs, for example, and also among the Jews.
[8] QS 2:2, and elsewhere. Though thought to be the word of God, it should be noted that the original form of the Koran—according to the text itself (85:22)—remains with God in an imperishable tablet (A. *lawḥ maḥfūẓ*).
[9] QS 14:1. For a discussion of the mysterious letters-symbols (the *muqaṭṭaʿāt*), see Asad's "Appendix II" in his *tafsīr*.
[10] QS 17:82. See also e.g., QS 16:89 and QS 12:111.
[11] QS 15:87, 36:2, 36:69, 50:1, 56:77 respectively. *Al-qurʾānu l-karīm* (A., the Noble Koran) is a common designation of the text.
[12] Wagtendonk 1968: 67.

Though it is a written text, it has numerous oral qualities,[13] and many Muslims recite—which, by the way, is the literal meaning of the Arabic word *qaraʾa*, from which *qurʾān* is derived—their Holy Book regularly. To recite the Koran is especially encouraged and popular during the month of Ramadan (as we will se below), and many pious Muslims recite one *juzʾ* (A., part) per day during the month, and thus ensure the recital of the entire Koran (A. *khātamu l-qurʾān)* during this month.[14] In non-Ramadanic contexts too, is the recitation of the text inevitable for a practicing Muslim. Anyone performing the five daily ritual prayers (A. *ṣalāh*), for instance, will recite the first chapter of the Koran, *sūratu l-fātiḥah*, at least 17 times a day, since this short chapter constitutes obligatory reading in every unit (A. *rakʿah,* pl. *rakaʿāt*) during ritual prayer. Moreover, this chapter also has the character of a supplication (A. *duʿāʾ*, as distinguished from *ṣalāh*), and is thus recited at various occasions; many Indonesian Muslims, for example, recite it as a substitute to other supplications they have not (yet) interiorized. Consequently, if one is not unknowing of the appropriate supplication for, say, going on a journey, then the *fātiḥah* can be read as a replacement. In Asad's translation, these "Seven Oft-Repeated [Verses]" (*as-sabʿu l-mathānī*, see QS 15:87) reads:

> In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Dispenser of Grace
> All praise is due to God alone, the Sustainer of all the worlds,
> the Most Gracious, the Dispenser of Grace,
> Lord of the Day of Judgment!
> Thee alone do we worship; and unto Thee alone do we turn for aid.
> Guide us the straight way–
> the way of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed Thy blessings, not of those who have been condemned [by Thee], nor of those who go astray.[15]

Apart from this chapter, additional *suwar* (A., chapters of the Koran, pl. of *sūrah*) will also be recited during *ṣalāh*, which thus constitutes one of the major vehicles for Koranic recitation for pious Muslims.

Another vehicle is made up of various other Muslim rituals, which are also almost certain to contain some Koranic recitation. *Rites de passage* such as circumcisions, marriages, and funerals are invariably punctuated by the sounds of a *qāriʾ* (A., reciter of the Koran), as are public enterprises, including grand ceremonies with cutting the first sod for a planned shopping center at its agenda, and the opening of large conferences or meetings. Individual and private enterprises too are often commenced with reciting some parts of the Koran, and this may be in connection with undertaking just about any-

[13] Welch has even argued that the oral version of the Koran was thought to be superior to its written counterpart in early Islam (1986: 426). For a discussion of the oral qualities of the Koran, see also Graham 1985 and Nelson 2001.
[14] The Koran is aptly divided into 30 *ajzāʾ* (A. pl. of *juzʾ*). One *juzʾ* per day during Ramadan will thus make certain the recital of the entire text. Indonesian attitudes towards this practice will be discussed in chapter five.
[15] QS 1: 1-7.

thing that would benefit from some supernatural guidance. The idea behind the recitation is the same, i.e., that God's blessing (A. *barakah*) will emanate from the words and guard over the planned enterprise.

The importance attached to the Koran by Muslims can also be seen from the practice of memorizing parts of the text. The importance of this practice can be appreciated from the tradition in which Muhammad is reported to have said that "Anyone who has nothing of the Koran within him is like a ruined house."[16] Indonesians who have memorized the whole Koran (A. *ḥāfiẓ*) is rather significant (the more so considering the fact that they have been brought up in a non-Arab environment), and the examination of new *ḥuffāẓ* (pl. of *ḥāfiẓ*) generally calls for a notice in the local newspaper. The divine reward for being a 'bearer of the Koran' is expounded in the *ḥadīth* literature, and discussed at some length by Ayoub.[17] Almost all practicing Muslims interiorize some parts of the Koran in addition to the parts needed to be able to perform ritual prayer, and of special importance are the short *sūratu l-ikhlāṣ* (QS 112), *sūratu l-falaq* (QS 113) and *sūratu n-nās* (QS 114), which together with *sūratu yāsīn* (QS 36), parts of *sūratu n-nūr* (QS 24, esp. verse 35) and *āyatu l-kursī* (QS 2:256), often are thought to possess special powers. In their capacity as powerful readings, these and other parts of the Koran are at times used for a variety of reasons. The more 'non-orthodox' (and thus, rare) usages I have come upon in Java include the practice of writing the text on a piece of paper, put some tobacco in it, smoke it and blow the smoke on the girl you like in order to—in the words of one friend who had tried this once too often—'get here full attention' (i.e., to get her to understand that you should marry, or, at least, start dating). For similar reasons, one can burn the text, put the ashes in a glass of water, and serve it to the same girl. Yet another method tells about writing some (specific) Arabic letters on the inside of your hand, and then rub it on your shoulder before meeting the sought-after girl (this method I have tried myself, quite successfully too). I also knew of one man who in order to get his car sold quickly—and to a satisfying price—used to wash it with water which he previously had 'seasoned' with a small piece of paper containing Koranic writ.[18] It should, however, be noted that this is in no way standard procedure among Javanese or Indonesian Muslims—indeed, many should regard it as *shirk* (A., idolatry), based on the idea that the practices mentioned put trust in something else than God. More mainstream usage of Koranic texts include reading the three last chapters (*sūratu l-ikhlāṣ, sūratu l-falaq,* and *sūratu n-nās*) three times

[16] This *ḥadīth* can be found in the collections of al-Tirmidhī and al-Dārimī available at [http://www.trueteachings.com/win/hadith/holy_qur.htm].
[17] Ayoub 1984: 7ff.
[18] To what extent similar practices are to be found among female Muslims in Java is unfortunately unknown to me. The man washing his car was, however, actively encouraged by his wife, and it is plausible to assume that female Javanese too engage in practices like these. For other examples of usage of Koranic writ in Indonesia, see Bowen (1993: 77ff, *idem*.) and his discussion of Gayo society.

into one's palms and then rub it onto one's whole body as a kind of protection against evils before going to sleep, as the prophet is reported to have done.

The powerful *suwar* and *āyāt* (A., Koranic verse, pl. of *āyah*) mentioned above, together with *sūratu l-fātiḥah* and others, are also often seen adorning the homes of the believers in forms ranging from simple home-made writings on ordinary paper, to elaborate handcrafted wood pieces. Mention should here also be made of the Muslim greeting (A. *as-salāmu ᶜalaykum wa raḥmatu llāhi wa barakātuh*) together with the *takbīr* (A., the pronunciation of *Allāhu akbar*, God is greater) and the *basmalah* (A. *bismi llāhi r-raḥmāni r-raḥīm*, 'In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Dispenser of Grace'). Cars, motorcycles, and helmets are increasingly often decorated with these and other Arabic formulae in contemporary Indonesia in the form of colorful stickers. (Anyone who has observed or been part of the Indonesian traffic would understand the logic.)

The oral qualities of the Koran, and its vitality, can also be seen from the many Koranic expressions that adorn non-Arabic languages in Muslim countries. In Indonesia, the national language—*Bahasa Indonesia*—is frequently punctuated by Arabic/Koranic words and expressions, amongst which mention can be made of the *basmalah*, the *taḥmīd*, and the *takbīr*,[19] together with expressions such as *māshāᵓ Allāh* and *in shāᵓ Allāh*.[20] Some of these expressions have become so intimately interwoven with the Indonesian national language that even some non-Muslim make frequent usage of them—the writer can still recall his astonishment upon hearing an Indonesian Christian burst into a proclamation of *Allāhu akbar* for the first time.

Finally, the elevated position the Koran holds in Muslim societies can be seen from Muslims' relations to the physical text. The general (Indonesian) Muslim would never take a copy of the text in his hand, had he not performed the prescribed ablutions (A. *wuḍūᵓ*, I. *wudlu*) first. Neither would he carelessly throw away a piece of paper holding Koranic text, since he could not be sure in what (disgusting and inappropriate) place it—i.e., God's word—would end up. I once read a column in an Indonesian newspaper, where the writer recommended Muslims to burn papers containing Koranic (or Arabic) text if they wanted to get rid of it, and also criticized the (alleged) 'Arabic custom' of using old copies of the Koran to wrap up oily food stuff.[21] Indeed, the practice of burning Arabic texts seems to be quite widespread in Java. These precautions are true only for an all-Arabic version of the Koran how-

[19] *Bismi llāhi r-raḥmāni r-raḥīm* (A., In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Dispenser of Grace), *Al-ḥamdu lillāh* (A., All praise is due to God alone), and *Allāhu akbar* (A., God is greater) respectively.

[20] The meanings of which are "Whatever God wills!" (see QS 18:39) and "If God wills!" (see QS 2:70). See further Madjid (1994: 62) and Muhaimin (1996: 36) for other common Indonesian words and expressions derived from the Arabic.

[21] Unfortunately, I cannot recall exactly where and when I read it. It was, however, in one of the major Indonesian newspapers (probably *Republika*).

ever; one that holds a parallel Indonesian or Javanese translation would not be the subject of the same attention.

RAMADAN IN THE KORAN

The Koranic verses concerning Ramadan and fasting are not numerous. In fact, they are easily outnumbered if compared to their equivalences pertaining to the practices of ritual prayer (A. *ṣalāh*) and alms giving (A. *zakāh*), which in a way hold similar positions as fasting during Ramadan within the Islamic tradition.[22] The bulk of the Koranic statements treating the practice is to be found in the second chapter, *sūratu l-baqarah*, verses 183-187. *Sūratu l-baqarah* is the longest *sūrah* in the Koran, and it also contains the longest *āyah* (282). The arrangement of the *suwar* in the Koran—as we know it today—is governed neither by chronological considerations nor thematic ones, but rather by the length of the *suwar*. With some exceptions—the most well known being the first chapter, *sūratu l-fātiḥah*, with its seven verses—the longer ones precede their shorter equivalents. Due to its extensiveness, *sūratu l-baqarah* has been called "the Qurʾan in little,"[23] and indeed, it does touch upon a number of important Muslim concepts, including, amongst other things, the so-called pillars of Islam, characterizations of the believers (A. *al-muʾminūn*), the unbelievers (A. *al-kāfirūn*) and the hypocrites (A. *al-munāfiqūn*), together with lessons on the unity of God (A. *tawḥīd*). The name of the *sūrah* is derived from *ayāt* 67-74, which tells the story of Mūsā (Moses) instructing his people to sacrifice a she-cow (A. *baqarah*) in order to settle a conflict concerning a murder, and there are also stories of other prophets to be found in *sūratu l-baqarah*. As for its internal composition, Wagtendonk, drawing on Bell, suggests that this Koranic chapter is "such that the successive parts suggest a sort of account of the development that took place from the time of Mohammed's arrival in Medina until the break with the People of the Book."[24]

The *suwar* in the Koran are divided into two large groups, namely those revealed to Muhammad in Mecca (A. *sūratu l-Makkiyyah*) and those revealed in Medina (A. *sūratu l-Madaniyyah*). S*ūratu l-baqarah* belongs to the latter category, and it is thought that the larger part of the chapter was revealed during the first few years of the prophet's stay in Medina (an exception would be *ayāt* 275-281 which probably were revealed during the last few months of the prophet's life). Compared to the Meccan counterparts, which in strong language declared—amongst other things—the unity of God and

[22] Together with the *shahādah* (A., testimony of faith) and the *ḥajj* (A., pilgrimage), *ṣalāh, zakāh* and *ṣawm* together constitute Islam's so-called five pillars (A. *arkānu l-islām*). See chapter one above.
[23] Pickthall 1994: 4.
[24] Wagtendonk 1968: 48.

talked about the rewards and dangers of the afterlife, the *suwar* revealed in Medina are generally longer and have a legal character. Another difference between the Meccan and the Medinan chapters is that the former generally hold the expression *yā ayyuhā n-nās* (A., O, mankind) whereas the latter are more inclined to use the phrase *yā ayyuhā lladhīna ʾāmanū* (A., O ye who believe). The logical reason for this is that during the Meccan period, Muhammad was surrounded by unbelievers and addressed his message to all of them, whereas his Medinan message is more directed to the Muslim community of believers. As we shortly will see, the injunction to fast during Ramadan uses the latter phrase.

QS 2:183

Due to its importance in relation to the practice of fasting during the month of Ramadan, the first verse of interest may be quoted in Arabic here, transliterated, translated by a number of translators, and then commented upon. (Subsequent verses will not receive this great attention.)[25]

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ كُتِبَ عَلَيۡكُمُ ٱلصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى ٱلَّذِينَ مِن
قَبۡلِكُمۡ لَعَلَّكُمۡ تَتَّقُونَ ١٨٣

[*yā ayyuhāʾlladhīna ʾāmanū kutiba alaykum aṣ-ṣiyāmu kamā kutiba ᶜalāʾlladhīna min qablikum laᶜallakum tattaqūn.* (2: 183)]

> O ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you, that ye may (learn) self-restraint.[26]
> O ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you, even as it was prescribed for those before you, that ye may ward off (evil).[27]
> O you who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may guard (against evil).[28]
> O you who have attained to the faith! Fasting is ordained to you as it was ordained for those before you, so that you might remain conscious of God.[29]
> O ye who believe, fasting is prescribed for you during a fixed number of days, as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may safeguard yourselves against moral and spiritual ills.[30]
> Hai orang-orang beriman, diwajibkan atas kamu berpuasa sebagaimana diwajibkan atas orang-orang sebelum kamu agar kamu bertakwa.[31]

[25] For an exhaustive grammatical discussion of the verses concerning the practice of fasting in the Koran, see Wagtendonk 1968: 47-81.
[26] Translation by Yusuf Ali, available online at the Islamic Server of MSA-USC.
[27] Translation by Pickthall (1994). Also available online at the Islamic Server of MSA-USC.
[28] Translation by Shakīr, available at the Islamic Server of MSA-USC and at the Electronic Text Center, University of Virginia.
[29] Translation by Asad (1980).
[30] Translation by Khān (1971).

> He wong kang padha mukmin. Sira kabeh diwajibake puasa, kaya para umat sadurungira. Supaya sira kabeh padha taqwa marang Allah.[32]

This verse, which is the single most important regarding the practice of fasting in the Koran, is naturally of immediate interest to us. We are here told that fasting is prescribed for the (Muslim) believers, just as it has been prescribed for other people previously, and this is thus one of the verses in the Koran that emphasizes the Muslim idea that Islam is a continuation of earlier revelations, and holds similar rituals as they do.[33] The word *ṣiyām*—and also *ṣawm*, which holds the same meaning[34]—is a verbal noun derived from the root *ṣ-w-m*, and the part of the verse containing this word could thus for the sake of clarity also be understood as "O, ye who believe! Prescribed for you is the fast...," although the meaning would still be the same.[35]

Further, we are also told the very objective of fasting within the Islamic tradition, and this concept needs further clarification here, since—as is seen above—translators differ in opinion concerning a correct English rendering of the word *tattaqūn*. This (imperfect, active) verb has been translated by Kassis as "to fear (God), to be godfearing; to ward off evil, to guard oneself against evil; to act piously," while its related noun *taqwā* has been given the translation "godfearing, godliness; fear; warding off evil; pious duty, right conduct, righteousness."[36] Wehr has suggested "to fear (esp. God)" and "godliness, devoutness, piety," for the verb and noun respectively.[37] These two words—and their derivations—are very frequent in the Koran, and it may be of help to us look at the derived active participle *muttaqī* as it appears in the beginning of *sūratu l-baqarah* (second verse). This term has been rendered as "those who fear Allah,"[38] and "those who guard (against evil)"[39] by Yusuf Ali and Shakir (and this corresponds to their translations of *tattaqūn* in *āyah* 183). Muhammad Asad, on the other hand, has translated it as "the God-

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[31] Indonesian translation (I. *Al Qurʾan dan Terjemahnya*) as proposed by the Departemen Agama (Department for Religious Affairs). This is by far the most common translation available in Indonesia.

[32] Javanese translation (J. *Tafsir al-Qur'an Suci (Basa Jawi)*) by Mohammad Adnan (1977?).

[33] See also, for example, QS 2:136 and 3:67. Though Islam in a way is seen as a continuation of earlier revelations (i.e., Judaism and Christianity), it must nevertheless also be understood as a departure from these revelations. And although Islam acknowledges multiple messengers and prophets with 'holy books' sent by God to previous people, Muhammad's position as the 'seal of the prophets' (A. *khātamu n-nabīyīn*; QS 33:40) and the Koran, by implication, as the 'seal of the holy books' cannot be questioned (note that 'seal of the holy books' is not a Koranic term; compare QS 6:92). Further revelations are unthinkable within the Islamic tradition, and would indeed, by definition, be superfluous.

[34] Though carrying the same meaning, the more common of the two terms in the Koran is *ṣiyām*. In fact, *ṣawn* is only used once in QS 19:26.

[35] Such a translation has been suggested by Kassis (1983: 1202). The point is that the Arabic word for 'fast' or 'fasting' is a noun.

[36] Kassis 1983: 1285, 1286.

[37] Wehr 1961: 95. See also *ibid.* 1094.

[38] Translation by Yusuf Ali.

[39] Translation by Shakir.

conscious," and also criticized above-mentioned translations since the first one fails to convey the "*positive* content of this expression—namely, the awareness of His all-presence and the desire to mould one's existence in the light of this awareness," and because the second only gives "one particular aspect of the concept of God-consciousness."[40] In the Indonesian translation referred to above we are likewise told in a note that fear (I. *takut*) is an insufficient rendering of *takwa*, which should be understood as the effort to "guard oneself from God's torments by way of following His commandments, and refrain from all His prohibitions."[41] In Indonesian then, the Arabic noun *taqwā* has been preserved as *takwa*, and from this the verb *bertakwa*, with the meaning "have *takwa*," has been derived.[42] The most comprehensive dictionary over the Indonesian language, the *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia*, gives a similar rendering of *takwa* as the Indonesian *tafsir* (I., Koranic exegesis, A. *tafsīr*) does, though with an additional alternative in the form of the awareness (I. *keinsafan*) that follows in the footsteps of *takwa* in itself.[43] We then see that the Indonesian understanding of the words that spring from the root *t-q-a/w-q-a*[44] comes close to that of Asad's.[45] The Javanese *tafsir*, as we saw above, also keeps the word *taqwa* in its Arabic form, and the general Javanese understanding of it comes close to the Indonesian.

QS 2:184

Now let us turn to verse 184 of *sūratu l-baqarah*, which in Asad's translation appears as:

> [fasting] during a certain number of days. But whoever of you is ill, or on a journey, [shall fast instead for the same] number of other days; and [in such cases] it is incumbent upon those who can afford it to make sacrifice by feeding a needy person. And whoever does more good than he is bound to do does good unto himself thereby; for to fast is to do good to yourself – if you but knew it.[46]

We are here told that the Muslim fast is to be held during a certain number of days, though the precise time of the fast is yet to be revealed. Though there

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[40] Asad 1980: 3, n. 2.
[41] *Al Qur'an dan Terjemahnya* 1971: 8, n. 12. *...memelihara diri dari siksaan Allah dengan mengikuti segala perintah-Nya; dan menjauhi segala larangan-Nya.*
[42] There is no special active participle in Indonesian for the word *takwa*. Instead, the form *mereka yang bertakwa*, i.e. "those who have *takwa*," is used.
[43] *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* (2nd ed.), 994.
[44] See Wehr 1961: 95, 1094.
[45] Another rendering of the active participle is given by Dr. Muhammad Taqi-ud-Din Al-Hilali in his "rough translation" of the Koran, i.e. "the pious and righteous persons who fear Allāh much (abstain from all kinds of sins and evil deeds which He has forbidden) and love Allāh much (perform all kinds of good deeds which He has ordained)." He thus also tries to convey the positive meaning of the word. Available online [http://www.unn.ac.uk/societies/islamic/quran/naeindex.htm].
[46] QS 2:184.

seems to be a connection with the following verse (185), not all commentators have agreed upon this, and some have instead argued that the days referred to in the two verses are not the same. That theological debate need not, however, occupy us here.[47] Further, it is also stated that it may not be compulsory for sick or traveling persons to observe the fast,[48] though they will need to fast when circumstances permit it as a reimbursement for the days missed. If the circumstances are unlikely to permit fasting in the near future, there is a special kind of ransom (A. *fidyah*) to be paid, in the form of food to a needy person (A. *ṭaᶜām miskīn*). This *fidyah* only becomes compulsory, however, if the person concerned can afford it.[49] The idea of fasting as a reimbursement is, however, probably of later origin, and it has been suggested that the early Muslim community (i.e., Muhammad) permitted the breaking of the fast for this ransom only. In other words, one was free not to fast if one did not want to.[50] Then it is stated that "whoever does more good than he is bound to do does good unto himself thereby," and here too exists different interpretations of exactly what is referred to. Asad, in an explanatory note, says he understands it to refer to supererogatory fasting,[51] a practice which is well recorded in the *aḥādīth*, whereas the Indonesian *tafsīr*, amongst others, holds that it refers to the practice of giving food to more than one needy person.[52] As I see it, it could refer to both of these practices. The verse is then closed with the assertion that fasting is good for the believers, though they may not always be aware of it.

QS 2:185

The following verse (i.e., 185) clarifies exactly when fasting is prescribed, that is in "the month of Ramadan in which the Koran was [first] bestowed from on high as a guidance unto man and as a self-evident proof of that guidance (*al-hudā*), and as the standard by which to discern the true from the false (*al-furqān*)."[53] What is referred to here, and this is of importance to us,

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[47] Interested readers are referred to Ayoub (1984: 190) and his references.

[48] I use the word "may" here since there are qualifications to this matter, which will be seen in the discussion about *aḥādīth* below.

[49] The phrase "those who can afford it" could be misleading. As Wagtendonk (1968: 58-9) has pointed out, the word *yuṭīqūnahu* implies exertion, and the phrase should thus not be interpreted as a privilege to the rich.

[50] Wagtendonk 1968: 59. This practice was then abrogated (A. *mansūkh*) by QS 2:185. The reason that it was permissible to break the fast and pay ransom for it might have been that fasting during Ramadan at this time was much more difficult and demanding than it later became—the practices of nocturnal fasting and total sexual abstention contributed to hardships of early Ramadanic fasting. (See the discussion of QS 2:187 below.)

[51] Asad 1980: 39, n. 157.

[52] *Al Qurʾan dan Terjemahnya*, 44, n. 114.

[53] QS 2:185. Commentators and grammarians usually hold that the word *ramaḍān* is derived from the verbal root *r-m-ḍ* which means 'exceedingly hot.' In pre-Islamic times, the month of Ramadan always fell in the summer, and the word thus refers to the heat in the desert during this season (Ayoub 1984: 191). With the coming of Islam, lunar months were introduced, and this

is Muhammad's first revelation, which occurred during one of his regular retreats to Mount Ḥirāʾ in the vicinity of Mecca.[54] During one of these retreats, which involved various devotional practices (including fasting), in the month of Ramadan, the Muslim tradition has it that Muhammad experienced his call to prophethood through the angel *Jibrīl* (A., Gabriel).[55] After something that could be said to be misunderstandings between the prophet-to-be and the angel, Muhammad recited, and thus 'received,' the first part of what we now call the Koran:

> Read in the name of thy Sustainer, who has created–
> created man out of a germ-cell!
> Read– for thy Sustainer is the Most Bountiful One
> who has taught [man] the use of the pen–
> taught man what he did not know.[56]

This prosperous night is referred to as *laylatu l-qadr* in the Koran,[57] and it is said to be "better than a thousand months" (A. *khayrun min alfi shahr*).[58] Further,

> in hosts descend in it the angels, bearing divine inspiration by their Sustainer's leave;
> from all [evil] that may happen
> does it make secure, until the rise of dawn.[59]

We will have plenty of reasons to return to this powerful night later; suffice it here to point out that it is only mentioned in the Koran in this specific *sūrah*.[60]

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with the consequence that Ramadan occurs 10 or 11 days earlier (in relation to the non-lunar calendar) every year. Note that Ramadan is the only month to be mentioned in the Koran.

[54] For a discussion of this practice, referred to as *taḥannuth*, see Wagtendonk 1968: 32-35.

[55] This was thirteen years before Muhammad's emigration (A. *hijra*) to Medina– corresponding to 610 C.E. Whether the Koran was revealed in its entirety or only partially during this night has been the subject of theological debate (see Ayoub 1984: 191f).

[56] QS 96:1-5. Asad translates *ʿalaq* as 'germ-cell,' though the more common translation is 'blood clot' or just 'clot.' (Needless to say, this chapter, *sūratu l-ʿalaq*, belongs to the Meccan period.) See e.g., ḤB 1,1,3 for details of the prophetic call this night.

[57] Usually translated as the 'Night of Power,' but rendered as the 'Night of Destiny,' with the additional alternatives 'Night of Almightiness' and 'Night of Majesty,' by Asad. See QS 97:1. Wagtendonk suggests that it should be translated as "night of the measuring-out" (1968: 83ff).

[58] QS 97:3.

[59] QS 97:4-5. The word translated here as secure is the Arabic *salām*, a word missing an appropriate English counterpart according to Asad. Asad further states that it "denotes inner peace, soundness and security from evil of any kind, both physical and spiritual, and the achievement of [...] "salvation" (1980: 145, n. 29). *As-Salām is* also one of God's attributes (see QS 59:23). The Javanese concept of *slamet* (I. *selamat*)—which is derived from the Arabic root *s-l-m*—will be discussed elsewhere in the thesis. It is noteworthy that the Javanese translation of the Koran uses the word *kesentosan* in QS 97:5.

[60] Mention is, however, made of a certain *laylatu l-mubārakah* in the Koran (44:2), and the reference here should be the same. Note that QS 2:185 and QS 44:2 are the only two places in the Koran that hold the idea of the Book to be 'sent down' on a specific moment in history. For

To return then to *āyah* 185 in *sūratu l-baqarah*, we see that what was said in the previous verse (i.e., 184) about unhealthy and traveling persons is once again underlined, and we are here given the reason to this concession, i.e., that "God wills that you shall have ease, and does not will you to suffer hardship."[61] Nevertheless, He expects that "you complete the number [of days required], and that you extol God for His having guided you aright, and that you render your thanks [unto Him]."[62]

QS 2:186

The subsequent verse initially seems to have little to do with the practice of fasting,[63] in that it says:

> And if My servants ask thee about Me – behold, I am near; I respond to the call of him who calls, whenever he calls unto Me: let them, then, respond unto Me, and believe in Me, so that they might follow the right way.[64]

There is thus no mention of fasting, and compared to the previous verses (183-185) and also the subsequent one (187), the "difference in style and content is striking."[65] This verse was, according to the exegetes, revealed to Muhammad after him being questioned about the nearness of God and the efficiency of private supplications (A. *duʿāʾ*). "Is our Lord near," the prophet was asked, "that we can pray to Him in private, or is He far that we cannot cry out to Him?"[66] The answer to that question is thus found in the above quoted verse. The central theme is that of the *duʿāʾ*, and Wagtendonk argues that this practice should here be understood in relation to the following verse (187) and the practice of *iʿtikāf* (A.), or seclusion in the mosque (see below).[67] Indeed, it seems probable that there was no retreat to the mosque without numerous private supplications, and the position of QS 2:186 thus makes sense—something the position of Bell then consequently does not. In Java, there is a strong link between fasting and private supplications (I. *doa*, J. *donga*), and it is generally held that one would be diverging from the straight path (A. *aṣ-ṣirāṭu l-mustaqīm*, I. *jalan yang lurus*) if one neglected

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an extended discussion of the relationship between revelation and Ramadan, see Wagtendonk 1968: 82-122.

[61] QS 2:185.

[62] QS 2:185. Koranic commentators have differed in opinion as to whether the missed days would need to be carried out (A. *qaḍāʾ*) on consecutive days, or if they could be repaid in installments (Ayoub 1984: 194). The common Indonesian standpoint in this question is that installments are allowed; in fact, I have never heard anyone arguing for the necessity of repayment on successive days.

[63] In Bell's words, this verse "has no reference to fasting, but rather to prayer, which Allah is ready to hear and to answer" (1991: 38).

[64] QS 2: 186.

[65] Wagtendonk 1968: 68.

[66] Ayoub 1984: 195.

[67] Wagtendonk 1968: 70.

one's private supplications during Ramadan. "This is the month when prayers definitely are heard," a Javanese friend of mine had it, "and it would take quite a fool to let that moment just slip by." More generally, the combination of praying (I. *berdoa*) and exerting oneself (I. *berusaha*) is often portrayed as the ultimate key to success in contemporary Indonesia (in *all* contexts).

QS 2:187

The last *āyah* to be considered here is 2:187, which contains legal rulings on three themes, that is, (a) the relations between males and females during the fast; (b) the daily length of the fast; and (c) activities during the last third of the month. For the first theme, we are told that

> It is lawful for you to go in unto your wives during the night preceding the [day's] fast; they are as garment for you, and you are as garment for them. God is aware that you would have deprived yourselves of this right, and so He has turned unto you in His mercy and removed this hardship for you.[68]

In other words, fasting during the month of Ramadan not only involves the abstinence of food and drink, but also the practice of sexual continence. However, sexual intercourse is permitted during the nights of Ramadan. But, as is alluded to in this verse, this was not always the case; in fact, the early Muslims used to abstain from 'going in unto their wives' during the entire month. This verse, in Asad's words, then "removed this misconception."[69] Likewise, some of the early Muslims used to fast from the evening meal of one day until the evening meal of the next, and even abstained totally if they fell asleep before the meal.[70] Thus the continuation of the verse sounds like this:

> ...and eat and drink until you can discern the white streak of dawn against the blackness of night, and then resume fasting until nightfall...[71]

That is to say, it is permitted to eat, drink, and have sexual intercourse from dusk until dawn during the month of Ramadan. But then follows a refinement of terms (the third theme):

> ...but do not lie with them [the wives] skin to skin when you are about to abide in meditation in houses of worship.[72]

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[68] QS 2:187.
[69] Asad 1980: 39, n159. Anything else would probably also be in dissonance with QS 2:185, which, as we saw, states that "God... does not will you to suffer hardship."
[70] Pickthall 1994: 28, n. 1. Cf. Ayoub (1984: 197), Mawdudi (1995: 41) and Wagtendonk (1968: 72, n. 1) for discussions of the early Muslim community in regard to the practices of sexual intercourse and eating and drinking during the Ramadanic nights.
[71] QS 2:187.

It is reported that the prophet used to leave behind his worldly affairs and devote himself to prayer and mediation in the mosque[73] during the last third of the month of Ramadan (and occasionally otherwise too, of course), and it is this practice which is hinted at in the above quoted verse. To seclude oneself in the mosque for devotional ends is known in the Islamic world as *iʿtikāf*,[74] derived from the root *ʿ-k-f* which, together with the preposition *fī*, may be translated as "to remain uninterruptedly in," "to seclude oneself in," or "to withdraw into."[75] This practice, which is well recorded in the *aḥādīth* literature, has become one of the supererogatory ways to devote oneself to God during the month of Ramadan.[76] As we saw above, to perform *iʿtikāf* also involves private supplications (*duʿāʾ*), and it is thus on this basis that the relationship between verses 2:186 and 2:187 should be appreciated.

Then before going on to discuss other topics, the Koran makes some final statements concerning what has already been said about the practice of fasting:

> These are the bounds set by God: do not, then, offend against them– [for] it is thus that God makes clear His message unto mankind, so that they might remain conscious of Him.[77]

To sum up then, although the practice of fasting during the month of Ramadan does not receive the same amount of attention in the Koran as for example ritual prayer (A. *ṣalāh*) or almsgiving (A. *zakāh*), it nevertheless has the status of obligatory ritual,[78] and some of its basic rulings are laid down in the text. For much of the actual practices during this month, we are, however, encouraged to search for more information in the abundant *aḥādīth* literature, and that is an enterprise that will occupy us below. Before that, however, we

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[72] QS 2:187. Note that the brackets and the text therein are mine.

[73] The word used for Asad's 'houses of worship' in QS 2:187 is *masājid* (pl. of *masjid*), i.e. 'mosques.'

[74] The term *iʿtikāf* is not to be found in the Koran—in QS 2:187 we find the form *ʿākifūn*. Wagtendonk argues that *ʿukūf* was a pre-Islamic practice, and initially perhaps not specifically connected to the fast of Ramadan (1968: 72-77).

[75] Wehr 1961: 632. The form used in QS 2:187 is *ʿākifūn*.

[76] The Indonesian *tafsīr* has translated the verb *ʿākifūn* as *beri'tikaf* (the suffix *ber-* signifying it being an intransitive verb), and added an explanatory note that says: "I'tikaf means to be in the mosque with the intention of bringing oneself closer to Allah."

[77] QS 2:187. To "remain conscious of him" is here the same *tattaqūn* (though here in the form *yattaqūn*) as discussed above. The Indonesian translation has here used the form *bertakwa*.

[78] I.e., fasting is "ordained for you" (QS 2:183). It is noteworthy that the Indonesian *tafsīr* uses the word *diwajibkan* in this connection. This word in itself is derived from the Arabic *wājib* (requisite, obligatory), and should thus be understood as "it has been made obligatory upon you." Acts and relationships in Islam are divided into five moral categories, i.e. *wājib* (A., obligatory), *mandūb* (A., recommended), *mubāḥ* (A., permissible), *makrūh* (A., reprehensible), and *ḥarām* (A., prohibited). (See for example Coulson 1964: 84f.) The *arkānu l-islām*, including fasting, are, of course, *wājib*, and this should be the reason the Indonesian *tafsīr* has decided on the word *diwajibkan*.

will need to see what is said about fasting beyond Ramadan in the Koran, and also what is said about the feast closing this month (A. *ʿīdu l-fiṭr*).

EXTRA-RAMADANIC FASTING AND (THE ABSENCE OF) *ʻĪDU L-FITR*

If little is said about Ramadanic fasting in the Koran, then even less is said about non-Ramadanic fasting, and as far as the feast (A. *ʿīdu l-fiṭr*) closing the fasting month is concerned, the information is even more meager. Indeed, only once is the noun *ʿīd* occurring in the Muslim Scripture, and at that point it is not the end of the month long fasting that is commented upon.[79] Acknowledging the enormous importance placed on this feast in Indonesia (where it is known as *Idul Fitri* or *Lebaran*) and elsewhere in the Muslim world, we should be a bit stunned by its failed presence in the Koran.

The few verses concerning the practice of fasting beyond Ramadan most often refer to fasting as a means of redemption,[80] though some speak in more general terms of the goods of fasting, i.e., of fasting as a pious act.[81] Wagtendonk has here drawn attention to the fact that in these verses:

> fasting is put on a level with believing, persevering, being humble, giving alms, being chaste, remembering Allah, being penitent, serving. It is a life which pleases Allah; it deserves heavenly reward, without its being otherwise based on a doctrine of meritorious works; nor has it anything to do with extreme ascetic practices."[82]

There is also one verse that describes Maryam's (Mary's) 'oral' fast in connection to the birth of ʿĪsā (A., Jesus).[83] Apart from these few verses, however, we are left to the abundant *ḥādīth* literature for guidelines regarding the practice of extra-Ramadanic fasting.

THE TRADITIONS

In what follows, I will first hold a comprised general discussion about *aḥādīth* and their position within the Islamic tradition, before I approach the literature proper, and what it has to say about the practice of fasting.[84] The

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[79] Rather, this verse tells about ʿĪsā (A., Jesus) and his disciples asking God to send down a "repast from heaven" that can be an "ever-recurring feast (*ʿīd*)..." See QS 5:114.
[80] QS 2:196, 4:92, 5:89, 5:95, 58:4.
[81] QS 9:112, 33:35, 66:5.
[82] Wagtendonk 1968: 140. The other fasts, i.e., the redemptive ones quoted above, actually also fall in this category of pious deeds. The Koranic injunctions of extra-Ramadanic fasting are discussed at some length by Wagtendok (1968: 128-139).
[83] QS 19:26.
[84] Much is said in the *ḥadīth* literature about food and drink more generally, but that falls outside the scope of the present thesis. Interested readers are, again, referred to Rodinson (1965) and

focus will be on the collections of al-Bukhārī and Muslim (see below), but traditions from additional sources will occasionally also be consulted.[85]

THE POSITION OF *AḤĀDĪTH* IN ISLAM

Taking into consideration what has been said above about the position of the Koran in the Islamic tradition, and that the prophet of God is referred to as an excellent example (A. *uswah ḥasanah*) in that Book,[86] we should not be surprised that Muhammad's deeds and sayings received extensive attention from Muslims from an early time.[87] These recorded deeds and sayings of Muhammad are referred to as *ḥadīth* (A., tradition, pl. *aḥādīth*), and closely connected to them—at times so closely that the two terms are used interchangeably—is what is referred to as (the prophet's) *sunnah* (A., path, custom). Burton wisely differentiates the two terms in that he states that "the term *ḥadīth* refers to a document, [whereas] the term *sunna* refers to the usage described in such a document."[88] In time, parts of these documents came to be regarded second in authority only to the Koran,[89] and a specific 'science of traditions' (A. *ʿulūmu l-ḥadīth*) has occupied numerous Muslim scholars in their strives for authenticity. Many of the early *aḥādīth* were indeed, it seems, fabricated, and Muslim scholars developed an intricate system for analyzing and criticizing traditions.[90] Many Western scholars have not, however, felt so assured by this system, and instead put serious doubt in regard to nearly all collections

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Wensinck (1978) for short introductions to the subject, and naturally also to the appropriate portions of the *ḥadīth* collections.

[85] References are made to the English translations of M. Muhsin Khan (al-Bukhārī) and ʿAbdul Ḥamīd Ṣiddīqī (Muslim).

[86] QS 33:21. It is also stated in the Koran that "Whoever pays heed unto the Apostle pays heed unto God thereby..." (QS 4:80). See also QS 68:4, 21:107, 33:56, and 59:7.

[87] Even during his lifetime, the actions of the prophet were closely observed and emulated. Ṣiddīqī gives some examples of the fervor Muḥammad's contemporaries showed in this respect, and *inter alia* states that "Abū Hurayra kept his [Muhammad's] company for three years, sacrificing all worldly pursuits, in order to see and hear what the Prophet did and said," and that "ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀṣ physically wrote down everything he heard from the Prophet" (1993: 4).

[88] Burton 1994: ix. The original meaning of *ḥadīth* was "new," i.e., an antonym of *qadīm* ("old"). This meaning has, however, been altered under the influence of Islam, as has many other Islamic terms (Ṣiddīqī 1993: 1). Note also that the term *sunnah* originally referred to the customs of the whole Muslim community, and only later came to refer exclusively to the prophet's customs (Ṣiddīqī 1993: 2).

[89] Exactly when this occurred is disputed, but it seems probable that intense interest in—and thus, collection of—traditions arouse at a time when Islam had reached beyond its original geographical borders and encountered new situations and problems. Of special importance for the position *aḥādīth* finally was to occupy was Al-Shāfiʿī, who argued that *aḥādīth* represented divine guidance and was referred to in the Koran as 'Wisdom' (i.e., 'the Book and the Wisdom'—*al-kitāb wa l-ḥikmah*; QS 2:151, 3:164, 4:113, 62:2—was thought to refer to the Koran and *aḥādīth*). See Robson 1971: 23f.

[90] See for example Juynboll 1993, Juynboll 1983, Robson, 1951a, Robson 1951b, Robson 1971, and Siddīqī 1993 for discussions of this system.

and collectors of traditions. This phenomenon is discussed at some length by Ṣiddīqī (who also gives the appropriate references) in an appendix aptly entitled "The *Ḥadīth*s and Orientalism," and need not be reiterated here.[91]

A typical *ḥadīth* consists of two parts—the chain of authorities (A. *isnād*, *sanad*), and the text proper (A. *matn*)—and is divided into one of the four major divisions: *ṣaḥīḥ* (A., sound), *ḥasan* (A., good), *ḍaᶜīf* (A., weak), or *sakīm* (A., infirm). Of the many collections assembled, six so-called *muṣannaf* works (classified according to topic) were to achieve almost canonical status in the Muslim world: the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī, the *Saḥīḥ* of Muslim, and the *Sunan* works of Abū Dāʾūd, al-Tirmidhī, an-Nasāʾī and Ibn Māja.[92] Together these are usually shortly referred to as 'the Six Books' (A. *al-kutubu s-sitta*), and especially the works of al-Bukhārī and Muslim—which have been the subject of their own *tafsīr* works—are greatly revered by Muslims. Generally, the collection of al-Bukhārī is held to be just a little bit above that of Muslim's when it comes to authenticity and respect, but the reverse view is also held by some Muslim scholars.[93] Despite the great respect they attract, even these two works have, however, received some criticism; Juynboll cites ᶜAlī al-Dāraquṭnī (d. 385/995) of having proved the weakness of 200 *aḥādīth* found in Bukhārī and Muslim,[94] and Robson mentions some Muslims who did not recognize the work of Ibn Māja, and thus rather spoke of the 'five books.'[95]

RAMADAN IN THE TRADITIONS

If compared to what is said in the Koran on the practice of fasting—during Ramadan and at other times—the *ḥadīth* literature is far more detailed. Topics discussed cover a range from fundamental theological basics to the details of fasting. Included in the material are thus both broad topics such as the promised (eschatological) rewards for fasting, as well as more specific reports on, say, the way the prophet took when he returned home after the *ᶜīd* ritual prayer, and the like.[96] Consequently, it would be virtually impossible to present an exhaustive discussion of the prophetic traditions concerned with fasting here; instead, I choose to highlight some of the—in my opinion—

[91] Ṣiddīqī 1993: 124-135. See also Rahman 1979: 44ff. And, again, note that the present study is more concerned with practicing Muslims' perception of their *aḥādīth* collections, than with the (negative) evaluations of Western scholars.
[92] Collectors died in 256/870, 261/875, 275/888, 279/892, and 273/886 respectively.
[93] Robson 1949: 46.
[94] Juynboll 1993: 193.
[95] Robson 1971: 24. See also Rahman 1979: 58ff. Of course, Western scholars have also questioned the authenticity of Bukhārī and Muslim; see for example Juynboll 1913-1936: 190, and Schacht 1949: 146. Their references to Goldziher are also important here.
[96] The rewards of fasting will be discussed in further detail below. As for the way the prophet choose to return to his home after the *ᶜīd* ritual prayer, see ḤB 2,15,102.

more important themes recurrent in the literature, and it is Bukhārī and Muslim that stand in the center of this enterprise.[97]

Theological Basics

That fasting during the month of Ramadan constitutes one of the so-called five pillars of Islam (A. *arkānu l-islām*) has already been mentioned. This fact is not mentioned in the Koran, but is elaborated upon in the *ḥadīth* literature, where it also is emphasized that this fasting is obligatory (A. *farḍ*) for large parts of the Muslims *ʿummah* (A., community).[98] The special place fasting during Ramadan holds within the sphere of Islamic rituals is made clear in a *ḥadīth qudsī*, in which God says about the fasting person and his activities that

> He has left his food, drink and desires for My sake. The fast is for Me. So I will reward (the fasting person) for it and the reward of good deeds is multiplied ten times.[99]

Elsewhere it is also stated that the fasting Muslim will enjoy two pleasures in connection to his fasting, i.e., at the time of breaking the fast (each day during the month and at the end of the month), and at the day of resurrection.[100] Because at this Last Day, there will be for those Muslims performing the fast out of sincere faith, a special gate in Paradise, called *Ar-Rayyān* (A.), through which only they may enter. God will call upon the fasting Muslims, let them go through this special gate, and then close it forever.[101] Closely connected to the idea that Muslims performing the obligatory fast will enter Paradise, is another idea found in the *ḥadīth* literature, namely that all Muslims performing this duty out of sincere faith and in hope for God's rewards, will have his or her previous sins forgiven:

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[97] Some readers may object to the selections I have made and question whether or not they make sense. I can only reassure those readers that I have tried to make an evaluation as sound as possible (though perhaps not so sound that it cannot be criticized), and that it would not be in my interest to discharge traditions that would illuminate (or even confuse) the topic. It should also be noted here that references are not made to *all* traditions that touch upon a certain topic. Consequently, *aḥādīth* concerned with the rewards of fasting, for instance, are more abundant in the *ḥadīth* collections than the ones referred to in the text. (Hedin (1996: 121) has stated that, summed up, there exists some 750,000 *aḥādīth*.)

[98] E.g., ḤB 1,2,7; 1,2,50; 3,31,115; ḤM 1,4; 1,9; 1,21. (For exactly what parts of the community this fasting is obligatory, see below.)

[99] ḤB 3,31,118. See also ḤM 6,2564. *Ḥadīth qudsī* (A., sacred, holy tradition) differ from the more ordinary traditions (A. *ḥadīth nabawī*, prophetic tradition) in that the former contain God's words, as distinct from that of Muḥammad's in a *ḥadīth nabawī*. A *ḥadīth qudsī* does not, however, hold the same status as the Koran, and may not, for example, be recited during *ṣalāh*. See Robson 1971a and 1971b.

[100] E.g., ḤB 3,31,128; ḤM 6,2566.

[101] E.g. ḤB 3,31,120; 5,57,18; ḤM 6,2569. There will also be other special gates, through which other groups of Muslims may enter in the same manner (e.g., ḤB 3,31,121).

> ... whoever fasts in the month of Ramadan out of sincere faith, and hoping for a reward from Allah, then all his previous sins will be forgiven.[102]

It is even stated in a tradition that whoever fasts one day for the sake of God will have his or her face removed "from the Fire (of Hell) to the extent of seventy years' distance."[103] Furthermore, during the month of Ramadan "the gates of Paradise are opened and the gates of the (Hell) Fire are closed, and the devils are chained."[104] The prophet is also cited by both Muslim and Bukhārī as having said that fasting is a "shield,"[105] presumably against sins and the fire of hell. Finally, the extraordinary position ascribed to (the practice of fasting during) the month of Ramadan can be seen from the Muslim idea—based on prophetic sayings—that to perform the lesser pilgrimage (A. *ʿumrah*) during this month is equal (in reward) to performing the regular pilgrimage (A. *hajj*) during its prescribed time.[106] In fact, the fast is so dear to God that it is repeatedly stated in the *ḥadīth* literature that the smell coming out from the mouth of a fasting person is dearer to Him than the smell of musk.[107] However—and this has been alluded to in the text above—just to stop eating and drinking will not necessarily be sufficient for claiming these rewards; sincerity and faith are two inevitable recurrent key themes in the literature.

It is not obligatory for all Muslims to perform the fast. For example, travelers may choose for themselves according to the following prophetic statement: "You [traveler] may fast if you wish, and you may not fast if you wish."[108] Consequently, it is reported that while traveling with Muhammad, some Muslims observed the fast while others did not.[109] In contemporary Indonesia, travelers (A. *musāfir*, pl. *musāfirūn*) at times chose to continue their fasting, though some decide to break it. There is a general high sense of tolerance from the ones continuing their fast towards those who break it, but I have heard some occasional critical voices. In these cases criticism has been directed to the differences of conditions during the time of the prophet and the contemporary era. To continue fasting while riding a camel for a whole day in the desert, it is argued in this criticism, profoundly differs and poses more difficulties than continuing fasting on an air-conditioned flight from Jakarta to Surabaya (though, as we will see, flight attendants may be said to be part of the trials of Ramadan). The latter trip would, however, involve a

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[102] ḤB 3,31,125. Cf. 3,32,231; ḤM 4,1664.
[103] E.g., ḤM 6,2570; 6,2571; 6,2572.
[104] ḤB 4,54,497. See also for example ḤB 3,31,123; ḤM 6,2361.
[105] E.g., ḤM 3,31,118; ḤM 6,2566.
[106] E.g., ḤA 10,1983; ḤB 3,27,10; ḤM 7,2884.
[107] E.g., ḤB 3,31,118; ḤM 6,2568. To someone who has been present in a large congregation of fasting men (for example on the occasion of a Friday prayer during Ramadan) and thus experienced the smell an occasion like that holds in its being, this tradition probably holds a deeper significance than for those who have not.
[108] ḤB 3,31,164.
[109] E.g., ḤB 3,31,169; ḤM 6,2477.

longer distance, and it is indeed the distance which determines whether or not it is permissible to break the fast. Pregnant and nursing mothers, menstruating women, elders, minors, non-Muslims, insane people, and others are also exempted from observing the fast; the interested reader is referred to Shu'aib.[110]

Manners and Relationships

The relationship between husband and wife during Ramadan—and especially their sexual relations—is a topic widely commented upon in the *ḥadīth* literature. As has been mentioned above, the early Muslims used to abstain from having intercourse with their wives even during the nights of Ramadan, until the following verse was revealed to Muhammad:

> It is lawful for you to go in unto your wives during the night preceding the [day's] fast; they are as garment for you, and you are as garment for them. God is aware that you would have deprived yourselves of this right, and so He has turned unto you in His mercy and removed this hardship for you.[111]

This verse receives some attention in the collections of traditions.[112] Though sexual relations must be avoided during daytime,[113] it is repeatedly reported that the prophet used to wake up in a state of *janābah* (A., major ritual impurity, i.e., after having sexual relations) during Ramadan and yet performed the fast the following day.[114] Likewise, we are told in numerous traditions that the prophet used to kiss his favorite wife, ᶜĀᵓishah, during daytime while fasting, though she is reported to have been quick to add that the prophet had the greatest control over his desires[115]—something that might not be true of ordinary people. Indeed, in a *ḥadīth* it is also stated that Muhammad gave his permission to a man who asked if he was allowed to embrace his wife while fasting, but that he also declined the same request to another man who asked about it. The explanation to this seems to be that the latter was a youth whereas the former was an older man (thus presumably having greater control over his desires).[116] Having sexual relations during daytime while fasting is, however, never permitted, and it immediately invalidates the fast. To break the fast in this way makes it obligatory for the breakers not only to make up for it by fasting after Ramadan, but also to observe other forms of compensation.[117] In a recurrent *ḥadīth* we are told that this compensation

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[110] Shu'aib: heading#20-34. See also Berg 1997: 94-95.
[111] QS 2:187.
[112] See for example ḤA 13,2306; ḤB 3,31,139; 6,60,35.
[113] E.g., ḤB 3,31,118; 3,31,128.
[114] E.g., ḤB 3,31,148; ḤM 6,2454.
[115] E.g., ḤM 6,2440; 6,2442.
[116] ḤA 13,2381.
[117] For a discussion of whether it is just the man or both the man and the woman that have to compensate for having sexual relations during daytime Ramadan, see Shu'aib: heading#73.

should take the form of freeing a slave, fasting for two consecutive months, or feeding sixty persons. This tradition also makes it clear that whoever is not (physically or economically) able to compensate in these prescribed ways, will be freed from it. The man asking about this matter in the tradition belonged to that disadvantaged group, and when that fact came to Muhammad's attention, a basket of dates was brought to him whereupon he ordered the man to give the dates in charity to the poor people. Since he, in turn, however, could not think of anyone poorer than his own family, the prophet finally said: "Feed your family with it."[118] Further, the fast is only invalidated if the persons concerned are fully aware that they are breaking God's revealed rules. This is in accordance with the Koran which says: "[what really matters is] but what your heart intends—for God is indeed much-forgiving, a dispenser of grace!"[119]

Good manners during the month of fasting are also emphasized in the literature. Indeed, "whoever does not give up forged speech and evil actions, Allah is not in need of his leaving his food and drink (i.e. Allah will not accept his fasting)."[120] Furthermore, it is reported that Muhammad became very generous ("more generous than a fast wind") during the month of fasting, and this is always stated in connection to the idea that *Jibrīl* came down to him during this time and recited the Koran with him.[121] From this could perhaps the conclusion be drawn, that reciting the Book while fasting will give birth to other sought-after qualities—such as generosity—in a person. Consequently, reciting the Koran and additional almsgiving during Ramadan has become standard procedure for large portions of the Muslim practicing community.

Time of Fasting and the Meals

The question of the exact time for the commencement and the conclusion of the fast—both daily and monthly—receives some attention in the *ḥadīth* literature, and it remains at times (as will be seen in subsequent chapters) a controversial issue for contemporary Muslims. That the beginning of the yearly fasting should coincide with the physical sighting (A. *ruʾyah*) of the new crescent moon (A. *hilāl*) is repeatedly reported in the *ḥadīth* literature.[122] However, if the sky is overcast and physical sighting of the crescent is impossible, Muslims are encouraged to 'complete' (A. *faʾkmilū*) the month of

[118] E.g., ḤA 12,1207; ḤB 3,31,158; 7,64,281; ḤM 6,2457.
[119] QS 33: 5. See also e.g., ḤB 1,1,1 (and note its position in Bukhārī's great collection). The concept of the right intention (A. *nīyah*) and sincerity (A. *ikhlāṣ*) will be discussed in a subsequent chapter.
[120] ḤB 3,31,127. See also for example ḤB 3,31,126, ḤB 8,73,83 and ḤM 6,2566. In the latter tradition, Muslims are urged to say "I am a person fasting!" if anyone tries to quarrel with him.
[121] E.g., ḤB 3,31,126; ḤM 30,5718.
[122] E.g. ḤA 13,2312; ḤB 3,31,133; ḤM 6,2365.

Shaᶜbān and regard it as consisting of thirty days.[123] However, there are also *aḥādīth* in which another position is held, and that is to 'regard' or 'calculate' the commencement of Ramadan.[124] This tradition is held in high esteem by those who prefer a mathematical or astronomical calculation (A. *ḥisāb*) of the beginning and the end of Ramadan.[125] A month can, however, very well consist of only twenty-nine days,[126] and we must also acknowledge the fact that the beginning of a new month (i.e., the sighting of the new crescent) may vary from town to town.[127] In the end, if a believing and reliable Muslim sees the crescent, then the fast must begin the following day.[128]

The daily length of the fast has also been debated by Muslims. The following Koranic injunction:

> ...and eat and drink until you can discern the white streak of dawn against the blackness of night, and then resume fasting until nightfall...[129]

was at times interpreted literally by the early Muslims, who indeed compared a black and a white thread throughout the night, without, however, making much out of it. When they took their case to the prophet, they were told that "the verse means the darkness of the night and the whiteness of the dawn."[130] Other of the early Muslims were confused by the fact that Bilāl used to pronounce the dawn *adhān* (A., call to prayer) while it was still dark, but they were encouraged by the prophet to continue their meals since Bilāl indeed had the habit of pronouncing *adhān* while still night.[131] The interval between the end of the morning meal (A. *imsāk*) and the morning ritual prayer (A. *ṣalātu ṣ-ṣubḥ*) should, furthermore, be around the time it takes to recite fifty verses of the Koran.[132] An Indonesian scholar, Husin M. al-Banjari, has made a study of three renowned reciters of the Koran and the time it takes for them to recite fifty verses. Depending on the length of the verses, this study shows that the average time this endeavor takes ranges from five to thirty-two minutes (the fastest time measured is four minutes and eight seconds), and the author suggests that five minutes should be the minimum of time that elapses

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[123] E.g. ḤB 3,31,131.
[124] E.g. ḤB 3,31,124.
[125] *Ibid.* See also for example ḤM 6,2363; 6,2368.
[126] E.g., ḤB 3,31,135; ḤM 6,2366.
[127] ḤM 6,2391.
[128] It is reported in a *ḥadīth* that a bedouin came to the prophet and said he had seen the new crescent. He was made to testify that there is no God but God, and that Muhammad is His messenger, whereupon his testimony was regarded as valid and Bilāl was ordered to announce that the fast should commence the next day (ḤA 13,233; 13,2334). For a discussion as to whether or not the testimony of only one Muslim is enough, see Shu'aib: heading#15. See also the discussion below.
[129] QS 2:187.
[130] ḤB 3,31,140. See also for example ḤM 6,2396.
[131] E.g., ḤA 13,2343; ḤB 3,31,142; ḤM 6,2407.
[132] E.g., ḤB 3,31,144; ḤM 6,2415.

between the time of *imsāk* and *adhānu ṣ-subḥ*.[133] The Indonesian Department for Religious Affairs (I. *Departemen Agama*), however, suggests an interval of ten minutes in their *jadwal imsakiyah* (I., fasting schedules).

Taking the nocturnal meal (A. *saḥūr*) is not obligatory, but recommended by the prophet since there is a blessing (A. *barakah*) in it.[134] As for the breaking of the fast, this should be done immediately when the night falls; Muhammad is cited as having said that "the people will remain on the right path as long as they hasten the breaking of the fast."[135] The prophet is further said to have taken dates or a glass of water at the time of breaking the fast,[136] and we will see in chapter five that this practice lingers on in contemporary Indonesia, which has to import large quantities of dates during Ramadan.

Supererogatory prayers

Nightly supererogatory ritual prayers are held in high esteem in Islam,[137] and during the month of Ramadan special prayers of this kind called *tarāwīḥ* (A., pl. of *tarwīḥa*) are performed. Anyone performing these *tarāwīḥ* prayers shortly after *ṣalātu l-ᶜishāᵓ* (A., the obligatory night prayer) out of sincere faith are said to have their sins forgiven[138]—a promised reward that fast made them very popular. Indeed, they grew so popular during the lifetime of the prophet that he quit performing them in congregation in the mosque, in order to make the early Muslim community understand that these prayers were not obligatory.[139] The question concerning the number of *rakaᶜāt* (A., units) to be performed during *tarāwīḥ* prayers has been subject to discussions and controversies: 39, 29, 23, 19, 13, and 11 *rakaᶜāt* have all been suggested, but it seems that Muhammad used to perform only eleven.[140] (The controversy over the exact number of *rakaᶜāt* to be performed remains alive to this day, as will become clear in subsequent chapters.)

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[133] Al-Banjari 2000: 74.
[134] E.g., ḤA 13,2337; ḤB 3,31,143; ḤM 6,2412.
[135] ḤB 3,31,178. See also ḤA 13,2346, in which the practice of hasten to break the fast is seen to be contrasting with the practices of the Christians and the Jews.
[136] ḤA 13,2348.
[137] E.g., QS 25:64. Many Muslims wake up to the words *aṣ-ṣalātu khayrun min n-nawm* (A., praying is better than sleeping)—a phrase that is added to the dawn call to ritual prayer (A. *adhān*).
[138] E.g., ḤB 3,32,226; ḤM 4,1664.
[139] E.g., ḤA 8,1424; ḤB 3,32,229; ḤM 4,1666. It was only under the second caliph, ᶜUmar bin al-Khaṭṭāb that the Muslim began to perform *tarāwīḥ* in congregation again (ḤB 3,32,227).
[140] This is according to one of his wives (e.g., ḤB 3,32,230; ḤM 4,1607). Nevertheless, there seems to be no prophetic or divine prohibition against performing more than eleven *rakaᶜāt*; see Shu'aib (heading#109) for a discussion of this. In the Mālikī law school, the *tarāwīḥ* prayers are said to consist of 36 *rakaᶜāt* (Wensinck 2000: 222). See also subsequent chapters in the present work.

Laylatu l-qadr *and* iᶜtikāf

Two important concepts concerning Ramadan are *laylatu l-qadr* (A., Night of Power) and the practice of *iᶜtikāf* (A., seclusion in the mosque). As for the first of these, we have already seen that it is said to be "better than a thousand months" in the Koran, and that "in hosts descend in it the angels, bearing divine inspiration by their Sustainer's leave; from all [evil] that may happen does it make secure, until the rise of dawn."[141] Naturally, Muslims are encouraged to establish (ritual) prayer during this night, the reward of which is forgiveness of previous sins.[142] However, the exact date of this prosperous night is uncertain, due to the fact that Muhammad simply forgot it just when he was to announce it to his followers. And the reason he forgot it is reported to be him getting disturbed by two quarreling persons outside the mosque.[143] As a result, the *ḥadīth* literature is ambiguous regarding the exact date of *laylatu l-qadr*—some traditions say it occurs during one of the last odd nights in the last ten days of the month, while others make mention of the last seven nights, and yet other the last three odd nights.[144] This night thus has to be 'sought after.'[145]

Iᶜtikāf is the second important concept to be discussed shortly here, and it has close connections to *laylatu l-qadr*. However, and this has been observed by Bousquet, there is a wide gap between the *fiqh* (A., jurisprudence) theory and the sociological reality regarding this practice.[146] In other words, very few Muslims are actively observing this pious exercise. Strictly speaking, one can perform *iᶜtikāf*, or retreat to the mosque, during any time of the year, but it is primarily during Ramadan, in their search for *laylatu l-qadr*, that Muslims engage in it. In the *ḥadīth* literature it is repeatedly reported that Muhammad used to withdraw to the mosque during the first third of the fasting month, but that he after that heard *Jibrīl* say that what he was searching for was still ahead of him. Consequently, he stayed in the mosque and practiced *iᶜtikāf* during the second third of the month, only to hear from the archangel again that what he was looking for was ahead of him. Thus, he stayed in the mosque during the last third of the month too.[147] What he was looking for was of course *laylatu l-qadr*, and we thus realize the close connections between that night and the practice of retreating to the mosque for devotional practices. More generally, we are told that the prophet used to "tighten his

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[141] QS 97:3, 4-5.
[142] ḤB 3,31,125.
[143] E.g., ḤB 1,2,46; ḤM 6,2624.
[144] For these three contrastive dates, see for example ḤB 1,12,777; ḤB 9,87,120/ḤM 6,2617; and ḤB 3,32,240 respectively. Yet other *aḥādīth* state that in coincides with the 27th of Ramadan (i.e., ḤM 6,2633-2634), which indeed is held as the most probable alternative by many (Indonesian) Muslims.
[145] E.g., ḤM 6,2619.
[146] Bousquet 1978: 280.
[147] E.g., ḤB 1,12,777; ḤM 6,2627. After that initial and experimental *iᶜtikāf*, it is reported that the prophet settled with the last third of the month (ḤA 13,2457; ḤB 3,32,237; ḤM 6,2636).

waist belt" during the last ten days of Ramadan and engage himself in devotional practices.[148]

ʿĪDU L-FITR (AND *ZAKĀTU L-FITR*) IN THE TRADITIONS

The feast concluding the month long fasting of Ramadan is referred to as *ᶜīdu l-fiṭr* and falls on the first of *Shawwāl* after thirty or twenty-nine days of fasting. It is at times referred to as *ᶜīdu ṣ-ṣaghīr* (A., the minor festival) in contrast to *ᶜīdu l-aḍḥā* or *ᶜīdu l-kabīr* (A., the major festival), but in the Indonesian/Javanese reality *ᶜīdu l-fiṭr* is the more festive of the two, and the ritually more important. As we saw above, the Koran states in connection with the end of the fast that it is expected that you also should "extol God for His having guided you aright, and that you render your thanks [unto Him]."[149] There exists in the Muslim world a special formula for magnifying God at the end of the fast that goes: "God is greater (3 times). There is no god but God, and God is greater. God is greater, and all praise is due to God."[150] In Indonesia, this formula, and all the practices around it, is referred to as *takbiran*[151] and is sung out from every mosque from the time of *ṣalātu l-maghrib* at the last day of the fast until the time of the *ṣalātu l-ᶜīd* the next morning. In practice, this means some thirteen hours of repeating this specific formula, and the male members of society usually take turns proclaiming it. (See also chapter five below.) The supererogatory ritual prayer, *ṣalātu l-ᶜīd*, consists of two *rakaᶜāt*—with some special features discussed later in this work—and is followed by a sermon (A. *khuṭbah*).[152] At Friday prayers, the *khuṭbah* is given prior to the *ṣalāh*, and some controversies are reported in the *ḥadīth* literature as to whether or not people will stay and listen to the sermon if it is given after the prayers.[153] To this day, however, the *khuṭbah* is—following the prophet's tradition—given after the prayers are performed; in Indonesia with the (to some, disturbing) result that not all members of the congregation stay till the end (see chapter five). It is further reported in the *ḥadīth* literature that Muhammad used to go out to the female part of the congregation after the sermon and preached to them, while Bilāl was spreading his garment collecting their alms.[154] Apart from this, not much is said in the literature about the practices at the time of *ᶜīdu l-fiṭr*, something which stands in stark contrast to the sociological reality in Indonesia, and

[148] ḤB 3,32,240: See also ḤM 6,2643-2644. Note that this "tightening of the waist belt" need not refer to strict seclusion in the mosque.
[149] QS 2:185, [partial] translation by Asad.
[150] In transliterated Arabic: *Allāhu akbar, allāhu akbar, allāhu akbar. Lā illāha ilā llāhu, wa llāhu akbar. Allāhu akbar, wa lī llāhi l-ḥamd.*
[151] The word *takbiran* is derived from the Arabic *takbīr* (i.e., the exclamation of *Allāhu akbar*; 'God is greater').
[152] E.g., ḤB 2,15,104; ḤM 4,1935, and ḤB 2,15,78; ḤM 4,1923 respectively.
[153] E.g., ḤB 2,15,76.
[154] E.g., ḤB 2,15,78; ḤM 4,1925.

other Muslim societies, where the feast goes on for days, and is unquestionably the most important holiday in the country.

Prior to the performing of the *ʿīd* ritual prayers, the special charity tax—*zakātu l-fiṭr* (A.) or *ṣadaqatu l-fiṭr* (A.)—need to be paid.[155] This thesis is not primarily concerned with the problem of *zakāh* and *ṣadaqah* (though, being largely neglected by Western scholars it should probably prove to be a fruitful area to study); suffice it here to mention that it is repeatedly mentioned in the *ḥadīth* literature, obligatory for both women and men (slaves as well as freemen),[156] and perhaps constitutes "the culminating act of generosity" during the month of Ramadan, as has been argued by Antoun.[157]

EXTRA-RAMADANIC FASTING IN *AḤĀDĪTH*

In the *ḥadīth* literature, we find much more information about extra-Ramadanic fasting than we did in the Koran. To begin with, we encounter some prohibitions concerning the practice of voluntarily fasting: Muslims are not supposed to fast two days before the commencement of Ramadan,[158] they are not to practice *al-Wisāl* (A., perpetual fasting),[159] and neither are they to fast too much generally.[160] They are further not allowed to begin fasting on a Friday,[161] nor to fast on the *aʿyād* (pl. of *ʿīd*).[162] And a woman with the intention to perform supererogatory fasting is compelled to ask for her husband's permission first.[163]

The most oft-mentioned day to engage in extra-Ramadanic fasting in the *ḥadīth* literature is the day of *ʿāshūrāʾ* in the month of *Muḥarram*. It is reported that the early Muslims (as well as the non-Muslims) used to regard the fasting of *ʿāshūrāʾ* as obligatory, and that this practice later was abandoned with the Koranic injunction concerning fasting in the month of Rama-

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[155] To pay it after the prayers would be too late and is not permissible. See e.g., ḤA 9,1605; ḤM 5,2159.

[156] See for example ḤA 9,1590; ḤB 2,25,588; and ḤM 5,2150. For short introductions to the subject of *zakāh*, see for example Schacht 1993 and Siddiqi 1987.

[157] Antoun 1968a: 39.

[158] E.g., ḤA 13,2320; ḤB 3,31,138; ḤM 6,2382.

[159] Indeed, to fast perpetually would be regarded as not fasting at all (ḤM 6,2591). Cf. ḤB 3,31,185; 9,92,402; ḤM 6,2587. It is highly recommended for those who want to fast as much as possible, to fast on alternate days, according to the practice of the prophet Dāʾūd (David). E.g., ḤA 13,2419; ḤB 3,31,196; ḤM 6,2602. According to the prophet, this is the best of fasts (ḤM 6,2587). And although Muhammad himself used to fast *al-Wisāl* (e.g., ḤB 3,31,182, 3,31,187), this practice should not be imitated by the believers since "I [Muhammad] am not similar to you, for during my sleep I have One who makes me eat and drink" (ḤB 3,31,184)

[160] E.g., ḤB3,31,198; ḤM 6,2580.

[161] E.g., ḤB3,31,205; ḤM 6,2543. Neither should they fast on Saturday or Sunday alone, since that may resemble the practice of the "polytheists." See Shu'aib: heading#40.

[162] E.g., ḤA13,2413; ḤB 3,31,214; ḤM 6,2542. The three days following *ʿīdu l-aḍhā* are referred to as *tashrīq*, and no fasting should be practiced during them. See Shu'aib: heading#138.

[163] ḤA 13,2453.

dan.[164] Most *aḥādīth*, however, states that fasting during *ᶜāshūrāᵓ* became voluntary; whoever liked to perform the fast did so, and whoever wished to abandon it did so.[165]

Further, it is highly recommended to fast during six days in the month of *Shawwāl*.[166] Berg, citing Juynboll, states that these six days should be the ones immediately following *ᶜīdu l-fiṭr*, i.e. 2-7 *Shawwāl*,[167] but it seems unlikely that many Muslims would fast these days since the festivities usually goes on for more than one day. Muslims are also encouraged to fast on the day of *ᶜarafāt*, i.e., on the ninth day of *Dhū l-Ḥijja*. The word *ᶜarafāt* refers to the mountain and adjacent plain east of Mecca, where the pilgrims spend this day. The pilgrims are, however, not encouraged to fast; it is rather meant to be a substitute for those not performing the *ḥajj* that year.[168] In the month preceding Ramadan, that is *Shaᶜbān*, Muslims may also fast in preparation for the month long obligation; indeed, it is reported that the prophet favored this month for extra-Ramadanic fasting.[169] More generally, we also find traditions encouraging three days of fasting in every month,[170] and it is especially encouraged to fast during Mondays and Thursdays.[171] Finally, mention may also be made of the prophet recommending fasting for three days if troubled by lice,[172] or in case a man cannot (yet) afford to get married.[173]

AL QUR'AN AND HADITS IN JAVA

The Arabic words al-Qurᵓān and *ḥadīth* are variously translated as *Al Qur'an, Al Kuran, Al Quran, hadis,* and *hadits* in Javanese and Indonesian. (Note that the Arabic plural form of *ḥadīth*, *aḥādīth*, is only rarely used in Indonesian languages.) In this short section, I will give the reader an introductory understanding of the position of Al Qur'an and *hadits* in contemporary Java; I will not, however, deal with questions such as the history of Koranic exegesis in Southeast Asia.[174]

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[164] E.g., ḤB 3,31,116; ḤM 6,2507. See also Buitelaar (1993: 16f), Goitein (1966: 95ff) and Wagtedonk (1968: 47ff) regarding early Muslim attitudes towards *ᶜāshūrāᵓ*.
[165] E.g., ḤB 3,31,117; ḤM 6,2504.
[166] ḤM 6,2614.
[167] Berg 1997: 95.
[168] Shu'aib: heading#147.
[169] E.g., ḤA 13,2425; ḤB 3,31,190; ḤM 6,2580.
[170] E.g., ḤB 3,31,202.
[171] E.g., ḤA 13,2430; ḤM 6,2605. In ḤM 6,2603 it is stated that there was no mention of Thursday, and that it thus constitutes an reporting error. Further, in ḤA 13,2426 mention is rather made of Wednesday and Thursday.
[172] E.g., ḤB 3,28,43; ḤM 7,2735.
[173] E.g., ḤB 3,31,129; 7,62,3.
[174] The interested reader is referred to Feener 1998, Riddell 1993, Riddell 2001, and Riddell 2002a.

As I mentioned in passing above, by far the most popular *tafsir* or *tapsir* (I., A. *tafsīr*, Koranic interpretation, translation or commentary) in contemporary Java is the one published under the patronage of the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs (*Departemen Agama*). One would of course suppose that some Javanese *tafsir* would hold this place, but Javanese has by large been reduced to an oral language, and the vast majority of the Indonesian publications are written in the national language, including Koranic commentary and translation. When asked about this condition, many Javanese have commented upon the awkwardness of *Basa Jawa* (J., the Javanese language) in its written form—all the more so using Javanese script!—and simultaneously referred to the straightforwardness of Indonesian. Indeed, Javanese is a complex language with its different 'speech levels'—usage of which is determined by social status, age, etc.—and the *Tafsir al-Qur'an Suci (Basa Jawi)* is likewise rather dull reading compared to the Indonesian translation. Further, much of the Islamic debate in Java is actually conducted in Indonesian, and it is thus preferable to be acquainted with that language's religious terminology. In Javanese cities and in larger mosques in towns, sermons are usually held in Indonesian, and indeed, only once have I heard a Friday sermon in Javanese in Yogyakarta. The government's efforts to make Indonesian a national language—in the widest sense of the term—seem to have been rather successful. (In minor mosques in Blora, and in other smaller towns, however, sermons are usually delivered in Javanese.)

The work on the *Al Qur'an dan Terjemahnya* (I., The Koran and its [Indonesian] Translation) was initiated in 1967 by the *Departemen Agama*, and may "be seen as an officially sponsored attempt to provide Indonesian Muslims with a 'standard' reference and thus ensure a greater uniformity in national discourse concerning the sacred text."[175] The translation is a one-volume work (different editions exist), and can be found in various areas of Southeast Asia; I purchased my own copy in Chinese dominated Georgetown, in Penang, Malaysia. The translation is aesthetically appealing with its legible, if small, Arabic, and parallel Indonesian translation. There is no transcription of the Arabic, which is quite common elsewhere. Every chapter is equipped with a *Muqaddimah*, or introduction, divided into four subgroups: faith (I. *keimanan*), law (I. *hukum-hukum*), (prophetic) stories (I. *kisah-kisah*), and other topics (I. *lain-lain*). We learn, for example, that the fourth chapter, *sūratu n-nisāʾ*, deals with—amongst other things—the greatest sin and the results of unbelieving (faith), polygamy, inheritance and marriage (law), Moses and his followers (prophetic stories), and the norms for marital relations and the basics of government (other topics). Furthermore, the Indonesian translation is equipped with apt headings throughout the work: *sūratu*

[175] Feener 1998: 63.

n-nisāʾ thus begins with the heading 'family laws.' Apart from this, the whole work also holds an extended (well over one hundred pages) *Muqaddimah*, in which topics such as the history and contents of the Koran are discussed. Here follows two samples from that introduction:

> *Al Qur'an* is a Holy Book that constitutes the first and primary source for the Muslim religion, it is a guide for humanity that Allah revealed to Muhammad as a blessing without comparison. In it is collected God's revelations that function as guides, compasses, and lessons for everyone who believes in it and implements its teachings into daily life. The Koran, as a Holy Book revealed by Allah, encompasses all aspects of law that can be found in previous Holy Books. Because of that, people believing in it will love it, will love to read it, will love to study and understand it, and also to implement and teach about it, in order that its grace can be felt by all inhabitants of this universe.[176]

Or, in more poetic terms:

> Every believing Muslim loves to read the Koran. When she reads it, she feels it as if her soul is facing Allah the Almighty: receiving instructions and holy blessing, asking for His favors, grace and assistance. /.../ There is nothing more joyous to the heart of a believer than to read the whole Koran: indeed, that constitutes the culmination of sheer bliss for him.[177]

The message is rather clear in both passages: Muslims love their Holy Writ.

ALL-ARABIC VERSIONS

The first time I saw a Javanese recite the Koran for two hours in a row, I was stunned; the more so when I learned that he did not understand a word of what he was reciting.[178] "It is not the meaning *per se* that is interesting," he explained, "but rather the blessing (I. *barakah*) that disseminates from the

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[176] *Al Qur'an dan Terjemahnya: Muqaddimah*: 102. *Al Qur'an adalah Kitab Suci yang merupakan sumber utama dan pertama ajaran Islam menjadi petunjuk umat manusia diturunkan Allah kepada Nabi Muhammad s.a.w., sebagai salah satu rahmat yang tak ada taranya bagi alam semesta. Di dalamnya terkumpul wahyu Ilahi yang menjadi petunjuk, pedoman dan pelajaran bagi siapa yang mempercayai serta mengamalkannya. Al Qur'an adalah Kitab Suci yang terakhir diturunkan Allah, yang isinya mencakup segala pokok-pokok syari'at yang terdapat dalam Kitab-kitab suci sebelumnya. Karena itu, setiap orang yang mempercayai Al Qur'an, akan bertambah cinta kepadanya, cinta untuk membacanya, untuk mempelajari dan memahaminya serta pula untuk mengamalkan dan mengajarkannya sampai merata rahmatnya dirasai dan dikecap oleh penghuni alam semesta.*

[177] *Al Qur'an dan Terjemahnya: Muqaddimah*: 104. *Bagi seorang Mu'min Al Qur'an telah menjadi kecintaannya. Pada waktu membaca Al Qur'an, ia sudah merasa seolah-olah jiwanya menghadap ke hadirat Allah Yang Maha Kuasa; menerima amanat dan hikmat suci, memohon limpah karunia serta rahmat dan pertolongan-Nya. /.../ Tidak ada suatu kebahagaiaan di dalam hati seseorang Mu'min melainkan bila dia dapat membaca Al Qur'an sampai khatam. Bila sudah khatam, itulah puncak dari segala kebahagiaan hatinya.*

[178] To be fair, he was of course acquainted with certain words, but not so many that the text was intelligible to him—in the linguistic sense, that is.

Holy Words." It would take me many months before I could even begin to understand what he was talking about, and to get a feeling of the supposed calmness (I. *ketenangan*) that Koranic recitation may grant the heart. In short, as good as any translation may be, the real deal is an all-Arabic version of the Koran, and this is both the standard normative opinion in Islamic law, as well as the general Javanese. Discussions of the 'translatability' of the Koran emerge from time to time in Java and elsewhere, and though these discussions may be conducted rather enthusiastically, there seems to be general agreement in contemporary Java that translations of the Holy Book can be very useful, as long as they do not take the place of the all-Arabic Koran. Though not generally being able to understand it, it is safe to state that the general Javanese devout Muslim spend a lot more time reciting the Koran in Arabic than reading any Indonesian or Javanese translation.

The entire Koran is thought of as superior to any other work, and especially the last part, the *juzʾ ʿamma*, together with *sūratu yā sīn* (QS 36; often referred to as the "Heart of the Koran" following a *ḥadīth*) are recited and revered by Javanese Muslims. The *juzʾ ʿamma* can be found in a variety of versions: some all-Arabic, some with parallel Indonesian, and some even with a transcription of the Arabic. The transcription caters to those who want to pronounce the 'Arabic sounds' but for whom Arabic script is unintelligible. Most Javanese learn to read at least some Arabic, but for some Muslims these transcriptions are of immediate importance: I knew of one Muslim female who read the 36th chapter of the Koran, in transcription, every Thursday night but had no nearby plans of learning to read 'Arabic proper.' Further, for some Javanese the transcription may help in case of uncertainty of how the Arabic should be pronounced.

Finally mention can be made of that small portion of the population that actually master Arabic, for whom the ability to punctuate any discussion or lecture with Koranic citations is a source of prestige, power and authority. In the words of Woodward:

> Because the Qurā'n [*sic*] is understood as the literal word of Allah, a person who can quote from it at will can link his own religious (and other) opinions directly to the divine word. In the opinion of many *santri*, such a statement can be refuted only by another of a similar nature.[179]

Indeed, who is to argue with God (except God Himself)?

HADITS TO THE JAVANESE

As we saw above, the traditions of the prophet constitute a model for virtuous life, since Muslims in Muhammad find an 'excellent example' (A. *uswah*

[179] Woodward 1989: 89.

ḥasanah) to be followed. Recalling the vast nature of the *ḥadīth* literature, we understand that the traditions touch upon multiple aspect of human life. Initially I figured that this would be a great burden for Muslims, but the Javanese are generally quite happy about the magnitude of the *ḥadīthic* quantity. "We have laws and regulations for everything," a middle-aged woman once commented, "it's great!" She then further elaborated her opinion enthusiastically: "There are regulations for which leg that should enter a market first—the right!—, which should get of a sidewalk first—the left!—and so forth. It's really useful, and there's no need to feel hesitant (I. *ragu-ragu*) about proper behavior." The same woman later showed a similar attitude towards all standardized Islamic prayers (I. *dua*, J. *donga*), in that she found it very convenient that small books on the proper prayer for, say, entering the toilet, could be consulted. No hesitation needed.

The general Javanese attitude towards the collections of *hadits* is one of respect, and just as citations from the Koran may help to authorize an argument, so can citations from *hadits*, knowledge of which thus also constitutes a source of prestige and power. It is generally also believed that all—or at least the vast majority—of the *hadits* are to be regarded as 'true.' I was met with much suspicion among 'ordinary Muslims' when I initially began inquiring about possible 'weak' traditions, and supposed critical methods for evaluating the traditions' soundness, and I quickly got the feeling that I was beginning to be regarded as an intruder, or yet another 'orientalist.' *Hadits* are indeed often uncritically regarded as historically valid and unquestionable sound recordings of the sayings and deeds of the prophet, and any effort of dividing these into several categories and sub-categories is often frowned upon by the general Javanese as an endeavor for non-believers. In popular literature too, this attitude towards the *hadits* is prevailing.

On the other hand, there exists specialist in Java too, and Woodward has informed us that "many *santri* can trace their academic lineage directly to Bukhari."[180] Scholarly works dealing with the traditions do not come in short in Java—though they rarely or never make it for the shelves of (Islamic) best-sellers—, and can be divided into four genres according to Federspiel, who has devoted a whole volume to the 'usage' of traditions in contemporary Indonesia:

> One genre deals with the analysis of Traditions that grew up in early Muslim history to sort out the real Traditions from those that were spurious. A second genre is Indonesian translations of collections of Traditions made during the Classical (620-1250 C.E.) and Middle (1250-1850 C.E.) periods of Islamic history. A third genre consists of new anthologies made by Indonesian authors selecting their own Traditions from the great collections. A fourth genre consists of specialized writings about the purpose and usage of Traditions relating in life in twentieth-century Indonesia.[181]

[180] Woodward 1989: 90. It should be noted that such lineages often are fabricated.
[181] Federspiel 1993: 1f.

Nevertheless, the author also notes, in relation to translations of the *hadits*, that "exegesis of the Traditions by Indonesian writers is still rudimentary," and that "this field of religious literature appears to be only in its infancy."[182] Federspiel also argues that al-Bukhārī and Muslim have been paid more attention by Indonesian scholars than the other collectors of traditions,[183] and this may perhaps explain the general positive attitude towards *hadits* in general in Java—as we saw above, these two collectors are held in very high esteem in virtually all parts of the Muslim world.

Finally, mention must be made of fact that the translation and exegesis of *hadits* in Java may serve as social commentary and critique—at least in the minds of some Western academics. Woodward has argued that an Indonesian translation of Imam Nawawi's *Riyadh as-Salihin* can be interpreted as a critique of Indonesian Islamic reformism, of Islamic radicalism, of Javanese religious practices, and of the Indonesian government at the same time.[184] I am not sure, however, to what extent the general Javanese reads a translation of *hadits* in this way; it is my impression that he would be more concerned with how he can model his own life upon that of the prophet.

LEGAL DIFFERENCES

That fasting during Ramadan constitutes one of the five pillars of Islam, and thus holds the status of obligatory ritual—with some reservations, as we will shortly see—is an undisputed question among Muslim scholars and laymen alike. However, questions concerning the exact nature and proper understandings of Ramadanic fasting have led to differences of opinion among predecessors and adherents of the four major—and numerous minor, of course—legal divisions in Islam, i.e. the Ḥanbalī, the Ḥanafī, the Mālikī, and the Shāfi^{c}ī schools of law.[185] Below, I intend to highlight some of these differences, and by doing that I will also make a general recapitulation of what has been said above. However, not too much ink will be spilt on this on this discussion—a decision encouraged by the fact that differences between these four *madhāhib* (A., legal schools, pl. of *madhhab*) only play a minor role in the contemporary Islamic discourse in Java. In fact, I have never heard a Javanese Muslim explain Ramadanic differences with reference to these legal

[182] Federspiel 1993: 41.
[183] Federspiel 1993: 48.
[184] Woodward 1993. Note that the work surveyed by Woodward was published during Soeharto's New Order, and that such refined criticism that it presents may not be needed in contemporary Indonesia.
[185] Readers interested in the history of Islamic law are referred to Coulson 1964 and the works listed in his bibliography. The articles on *fiqh* and *sharī^{c}ah* in the Encyclopaedia of Islam (2nd ed.) are also recommended as informative introductions to these topics (see Schacht 1965 and Hooker 1997).

schools, and neither have I come upon any Indonesian or Javanese text dealing with this issue.

The vast majority of the Javanese belong to the Shāfiᶜī legal school, though this fact is only rarely reflected upon by ordinary Javanese Muslims (who thus can be said to be adherents of the Shāfiᶜī *madhhab* rather unconsciously).[186] Members of the Muhammadiyah are, however, quick to point out that they not are bound by any specific legal school, and the differences between them and members of other religious organizations (the NU, for example) thus goes back to, amongst other things, the problem of *ijtihād* and *taqlīd* (discussed in chapter two), since the former rejects (blind) adherence to any school of thought or thinker, whereas the latter emphasize its importance. Nevertheless, Shāfiᶜī is by far the most important and influential legal school in Indonesia.

Due to the fact that I have been unable to localize any Indonesian text dealing with the relationship between Ramadanic differences and legal schools, I will below base my discussion on two translated (from Arabic to Indonesian) works widely available in major towns in Java during Ramadan 2002 (1423 AH). In translation, these works are entitled *Puasa Menurut Empat Mazhab: Hanafi, Maliki, Syafi'i, Hanbali* (I., Fasting According to the Four Legal Schools: Ḥanafī, Ṃālikī, Shāfiᶜī, Ḥanbalī) and *Puasa dan Itikaf: Kajian Berbagai Mazhab* (I., Fasting and *Iᶜtikāf*: A Study of Different Legal Schools), written by the respected Abdulrahman Al-Jaziri and Wahbah al-Zuhayly respectively.[187] Following these works, I will below make a thematic approach to some important aspects of Ramadanic fasting, but I will naturally also leave a substantial amount of themes or aspects of fasting outside this discussion. Interested readers are referred to the above-mentioned works, in original or in translation.

DEFINITIONS OF FASTING AND VARIOUS FASTS

The meaning of *ṣiyām*, it is agreed, is to 'abstain from whatever renders the fast invalid' from dawn to dusk. Mālikī and Shāfiᶜī *ᶜulamāᵓ* add, however, in their definition of the fast, that it has to be performed with (the right) intention (A. *niyyah*, I. *niat*). Ḥanbalī and Ḥanafī scholars are also preoccupied with the importance of the right intention, but they situate it not in the definition of fasting, but rather in the fast's prerequisites (see below).[188] The decla-

[186] An example of the unconscious Shāfiᶜism of the Javanese can be found in their attitude towards the ritual purity needed to perform the *ṣalāh*. Most Javanese would argue that the *wuḍūᵓ* (A., I. *wudlu*), or ritual cleansing, would be immediately invalidated (I. *batal, dibatalkan*) by physical contact between the sexes, and Shāfiᶜī is the only legal school to support this opinion. The other law schools have a more refined attitude towards the problem, which need not be discussed here.

[187] al-Jaziri 1995 and al-Zuhayly 1995.

[188] al-Jaziri 1995: 9f.

ration of the *niyyah* is of extreme importance to Muslims, since its failed presence would render any act of worship *bāṭil* (A., I. *batil*, invalid, worthless).[189] In al-Zuhayly's words, the aim of the intention is to differentiate between acts of worship and mere habits.[190] That *niat* is part and parcel of valid fasting is widely accepted in Java, though some differences of opinion occur as to whether the intention to fast has to be pronounced for each of the twenty-nine or thirty days of fasting, or if it is enough to pronounce it once at the commencement of the fast. The common opinion is that the intention should be pronounced each night, and indeed, it is communally articulated in the mosque after the supererogatory nightly prayers. The language of the *niat* also invites to some debate—is Javanese sufficient or do we have to learn the Arabic version by heart?—, but this is generally solved by the *imam* (I., prayer leader, A. *imām*) reciting both Javanese and Arabic intentions, and the congregation can choose which one to follow (normally, however, Javanese Muslims recite both versions, if they have the ability to do so). In modernist mosques there is a tendency to pronounce only the Arabic intention, but Javanese is occasionally heard. (It is noteworthy, perhaps, that I have never heard an Indonesian version of the intent in Java.) The importance ascribed to the *niat* in Java can be seen from the fact that it is one of the first things learnt by heart by Muslim children in school, and when it is time to pronounce the intention in the mosque, all children present suddenly quit their games and conversations and loudly pronounce the *niat* in a mechanical voice in Arabic (following the *imam*):

> *Nawaytu ṣawma ghadin ᶜan adāᵓi farḍi l-shahri ramaḍāna hādhihi s-sanati farḍān lillāhi taᶜālā,*

which then is immediately followed by the Javanese translation:

> *Niat ingsun puasa tutuko sedino sesuk anekani ferdhune wulan romadlon ing sak jerone tahun iki ferdhu kerono miturut dhawuhe Allah.*[191]

Apart from the Ḥanafī school of law, the major legal schools acknowledge four different fasts.[192] The first of these is the *farḍ* fast, that is, the obligatory fast during Ramadan.[193] Then we find *mandūb* (A., recommendable), *ḥarām* (A., prohibited) and *makrūh* (A., reprehensible) fasts. We need

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[189] Wensinck 1995: 66.
[190] al-Zuhayly 1995: 85.
[191] In English translation approximately: "I intend to fast tomorrow due to the religious duty of Ramadan this year, for Allah the Exalted." There exists some different versions of the intent to fast during Ramadan; this one stems from a leaflet distributed by mosque officials in my *kampung* in Blora just prior to the commencement of Ramadan 2002. For some other versions, see Muslim 2001: 5.
[192] The Ḥanafī school recognizes eight fasts; see al-Jaziri 1995: 10ff and al-Zuhayly 1995: 107ff.
[193] Though fasting is only obligatory during Ramadan, fasting can become obligatory due to different reasons (see al-Zuhayly 1995: 108).

not in detail discuss the differences of opinion among the different legal schools in relation to this problem; suffice it to mention two examples. The first of these concerns the practice of fasting during one or two days immediately prior to the month of Ramadan. The Ḥanbalī, Ḥanafī and the Mālikī schools of law regard this practice as *makrūh*, whereas the Shāfiᶜī *madhhab* condemns it as *ḥarām*.[194] Consequently, I have never come upon anybody fasting during the last days of *Shaᶜbān* in Java. The second example concerns the question of the need of completing broken *mandūb* fasts, or in other words, the question of the permissibility to break a recommended fast without having to make up for it later. According to the Ḥanafī and the Mālikī *madhāhib*, Muslims breaking a recommended fast have to complete it at a later stage, since they have made a covenant with God which cannot be nullified at their own wish. This argumentation is based on the Koranic injunction we meet in QS 47:33: "...and let not your [good] deeds come to nought." Ḥanbalī and Shāfiᶜī, on the other hand, argue that broken *mandūb* fasts need not be completed later. However, it is *mandūb* to do it; "completing worship is worship," in Zuhayly's words.[195] In Java, this latter opinion is stronger than the former, and it is commonly argued that anyone performing a recommended fast has the right to break it without any legal consequences.

PREREQUISITES OF FASTING

The prerequisites of fasting and the differences of opinion among the different legal schools concerning this issue is a complex matter. Add to this then a variety of opinions among scholars trying to explain it. A simplified and schematic overview may be of help here. (Note that the scheme is based upon al-Jaziri, and that the information within angle brackets refers to differences between him and al-Zuhayly. Note also that the prerequisites mentioned below are divided into a variety of subgroups too; for the sake of clarity, these subgroups and the fine divisions they represent have been omitted here.)

	Prerequisites for fasting
Shāfiᶜī	Muslim; mature; sane; capable to perform the fast; understand the fast; ritually pure; time for fasting (Ramadan)
Ḥanafī	Muslim; mature; sane; healthy; not be traveling; ritually pure; pronounce the intent; [+ to know the obligatory status of Ramadanic fasting for people accepting Islam in the battlefield; the absence of anything that renders the fast invalid]
Mālikī	Muslim; mature; sane; capable to perform the fast; ritually pure; time for fasting (Ramadan); pronounce the intent; [+ not be traveling]
Ḥanbalī	Muslim; mature; sane; capable to perform the fast; ritually pure; understand the fast; pronounce the intent

[194] al-Zuhayly 1995: 116.
[195] al-Zuhayly 1995: 138.

We thus see that there exists slight differences in the attempts of clarifying the prerequisites for Ramadanic fasting.[196] Even the definitions of the words above invite different opinions; the word 'mature,' for example—and one example is perhaps enough—, is differently understood among the legal schools. According to the Shāfiᶜī, Ḥanbalī, and Ḥanafī *madhāhib*, a child who understands the meaning of Ramadanic fasting and is above the age of seven years should be ordered to fast, and then beaten by the age of ten would s/he refuse to perform the obligatory fast. Within the Mālikī legal school, on the other hand, maturity is defined as sexual maturity, i.e., wet dreams for boys and menstruation for girls.[197] In Java, I have never heard of anyone beating their child due to it refusing to fast, but it is not uncommon that one begins to fast around the age of ten. During this early fasting, however, there is wide freedom for Javanese children. It is, for example, common that children fast only half the day, then eat and drink their fills before going back to fasting until dusk. Some informants have also stated that they in their childhood occasionally 'forgot' that they were fasting and thus had a snack before 'remembering' and consequently going back to fasting. Further, should the children complain about their physical condition, and insinuate that this could be caused by their fasting, they are often encouraged by family and elder friends to break the fast. Generally, the concept of 'maturity' (in relation to Ramadanic fasting, at least) in Java is something that is decided upon by the youngster himself, and fasting is thus commenced upon his own wish. Pressure from friends and relatives may, however, play a significant role in taking that decision.

WHO CAN SEE THE MOON?

In order to establish the commencement of Ramadan—as we saw above—, many Muslims rely on the sighting of the new moon. But not everyone's testimony can be taken at face value, and here again is a scheme over the different opinions:

	Characteristics of people/groups whose testimony can be accepted
Shāfiᶜī	Muslim, sane, mature, free, man, just. Need to state: "I testimony that..."
Ḥanafī	1. If the sky is clear: a large group of people (without specific characteristics) 2. If the sky is overcast: Muslim; sane; mature; just; man or woman
Mālikī	1. If seen by a large group of people: without specific characteristics 2. If seen by two persons: men; just; free; sane; mature; Muslims; free from large sins; only rarely perform minor sins; do not perform anything that might ruin their authority 3. If seen by only one person: just (this testimony is only valid for himself

[196] See al-Jaziri 1995: 15-28 and especially al-Zuhayly 1995: 160-189 for more extensive discussions of this topic.
[197] al-Zuhayly 1995: 163.

	and anyone who accepts it)
Ḥanbalī	Sane; just; man or woman; free or slave

We thus see again that the different *madhāhib* differ slightly in their opinions.[198] The Indonesian way will be discussed below.

WHAT INVALIDATES THE FAST AND WHAT DOES NOT?

During Ramadan, Indonesian newspapers usually make room for a special column in which an *ʿalīm* (A., Islamic scholar, pl. *ʿulamāʾ*, I. *ulama*) answers the readers' questions about fasting, and there seems to be a preoccupation with questions concerning what is prohibited and what is permissible during the holy month. One of the more popular columns in Indonesia is the one managed by Quraish Shihab in the daily *Republika*, and some of the questions and answers found there have later been published in the form of a 'guide for fasting.'[199] Three examples from this book may be illuminative:

> Q: Is the fast invalidated by dreaming of sexual relations during daytime? What is the penalty, and how should it be paid?
> A: Allah does not punish someone for something that is outside his or her control, as dreaming of sexual relations, even if it involves the secretion of sperm or someone else apart from your own wife. The fast is not invalidated.[200]

> Q: People say that farting while swimming invalidates the fast? Is that right?
> A: Some scholars would say the fast is invalidated, other would not. They say it becomes invalidated by the fact that water may enter a place which may invalidate the fast. I am inclined to say the fast is invalidated. You'd better not swim during daytime.[201]

> Q: May I use bribes in order to find work for my relative? Would those bribes invalidate my fast?
> A: Bribes, regardless of usage, are not in accordance with Islam; they constitute a major sin. But from a legal perspective, bribes do not invalidate your fast, but they surely reduce its value.[202]

In order to clarify the differences and similarities between the four major *madhāhib*, once again a schematic overview may be of some help.[203] Actions invalidating the fast can be divided into two major groups, based on the legal consequences they demands: (1) those actions which craves both *qaḍāʾ* (A., redemption, payment) and *kaffārah* (A., atonement, expiation), and (2), those which craves *qaḍāʾ* only.

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[198] See also al-Jaziri 1995: 28-35 and al-Zuhayly 1995: 142-151.
[199] Kiram & Supriyatna 2000. During Ramadan 2002/1423 this column was still running and popular.
[200] Kiram & Supriyatna 2000: 3.
[201] Kiram & Supriyatna 2000: 20.
[202] Kiram & Supriyatna 2000: 66f.
[203] Based on al-Jaziri 1995: 57-85 and al-Zuhayly 1995: 226-267.

	Qaḍā° *and* Kaffārah		Qaḍā° *only*	*Neither* qaḍā° *nor* kaffārah
	Action	*Prerequisites*	*Action*	*(i.e., permissible)*
Shāfi'ī	1. having sexual relations	Intended to fast; did it on purpose; was not forced; knew about its unlawfulness; during Ramadan; it was the sexual relation which invalidated the fast; the sexual relation constituted a sin; not insane; done by own wish; not a mistake; inserted whole penis; inserted penis in vagina or anus; being the active part	1. swallowing something (not on purpose) 2. smoking 3. inserting finger in anus or vagina in order to clean it 4. inserting a small piece of wood into the ear 5. gargling excessively 6. eating leftovers in the mouth which could be spitted out 7. vomiting on purpose 8. spitting out a fly which already made it all the way to the stomach 9. burping on purpose with the effect of something coming up reaching the tip of the throat 10. secreting sperm due to unlawful physical contact	1. eating or drinking due to forgetting; being forced; or being uninformed about its unlawfulness 2. swallowing something that cannot be avoided; like dust; flies; mosquitoes; etc. 3. applying black or blue color around the eyes or forehead 4. kissing or hugging one's wife 5. secreting sperm due to seeing something arousing 6. brushing one's teeth
Ḥanafī	1. eating; drinking; smoking 2. having sexual relations	Intended to fast; not lawful to break the fast due to other reasons; was not forced; did it on purpose	1. eating something which has no satisfying effect (medicine) 2. eating something which has a satisfying effect; due to forgetting; being travelling; being ill; etc.	1. eating; drinking or having sexual relations due to forgetting 2. secreting sperm due to seeing something arousing 3. applying black or blue color around the eyes or forehead 4. brushing one's teeth 5. gurgling 6. bathing 7. intending to break the fast; without breaking it 8. swallowing dust; pollution etc. 9. pulling out a tooth 10. applying water or oil to penis; inserting small pieces of wood into the ears 11. swallowing phlegm or snot 12. vomiting not on purpose

				13. eating leftovers in the mouth 14. being in a state of ritual impurity due to sexual relations
Mālikī	1. having sexual relations 2. vomiting on purpose 3. drinking 4. eating	During Ramadan; did it on purpose; was not forced; knew about its unlawfulness; not a person who cares about the honor of the holy month; food inserted through the mouth and reaching the stomach	[As in the column for *qaḍāʾ* and *kaffārah*; but without the prerequisites]	1. vomiting not on purpose 2. injecting medicine into penis 3. applying medicine on the stomach 4. stop eating; drinking and having sexual relations when the sun rises 5. secreting sperm due to seeing something arousing 6. swallowing saliva or food leftovers 7. gurgling 8. brushing one's teeth 9. being in a state of ritual impurity
Ḥanbalī	1. having sexual relations 2. female (lesbian) sexual relations	[no special prerequisites]		1. swallowing something not purposely 2. gurgling 3. brushing one's teeth 4.chewing *ʿilk* or mastic (*pistacia lentiscus*) 5. kissing; hugging; touching one's wife without secreting sperm 6. secreting sperm due to seeing something arousing 7. secreting blood from the nose 8. using medicine that do not reach the stomach 9. eating; drinking and having sexual relations while being doubtful about whether the sun has risen or not 10. vomiting not purposely 11. brushing one's teeth 12. applying black or blue color around the eyes or forehead 13. inserting something (by herself) into her vagina

To complicate matters further, there also exists some differences concerning the definition of *kaffārah*. According to the Shāfiʿī, Ḥanbalī, and Ḥanafī *madhāhib*, *kaffārah* means releasing a Muslim slave. If the fast breaker is unable to do so, he will have to fast for two months consecutively, and if that too is beyond his ability he has to feed sixty poor people. This is in accor-

dance with the *ḥadīth* quoted above.[204] According to the Mālikī *madhhab*, on the other hand, the fast breaker may choose from these three alternatives, of which feeding poor people is thought to be the most noble way, followed by freeing a slave and finally fasting.[205]

WHO MAY BREAK THE FAST?

As mentioned above, not all Muslims need to fast during Ramadan; indeed, some conditions even render the fast invalid. Below, a short discussion will follow about exactly who may break the fast—and under what conditions—according to the different legal schools.[206]

Illness is the first condition that may allow a Muslim not to fast. A sick person who is worried that his condition will worsen if he fasts or if his recovery will be postponed, does not need to fast (according to the Ḥanbalī school it is *sunnah* not to fast, and *makrūh* to fast during such a condition). If he is seriously ill and by fasting puts his life at risk, all the legal schools agree that fasting would be *ḥarām.* If a person, on the other hand, is perfectly healthy but worries that he may fall ill if fasting, the various schools differ in opinion. According to the Ḥanbalī school, it would be *sunnah* not to fast and *makrūh* to fast, whereas the Ḥanafī school would have it that the person could choose if he wants to fast or not. If the person worries that he will fall seriously ill, it would be *ḥarām* to fast according to the Mālikī school, whereas the Shāfiᶜī school would not allow him not to fast before trying. Of course, non-serious illnesses such as toothache, skin diseases, boils, etc. do not qualify for not fasting.

Pregnant and nursing women constitute another category of people that may be excused from fasting. Generally all four *madhāhib* allow these women not to fast, but some minor—and by now out of date?—differences do occur. The Ḥanbalī *madhhab*, for example, holds that a nursing mother whose economy allows it and whose child accepts another nursing woman, has to hire this woman for her child and then perform the fast. Women who choose not to fast (due to pregnancy or nursing) will have to make up for it later, however: according to Ḥanafī in the form of *qaḍāʾ*, according to Shāfiᶜī and Ḥanbalī in the form of *qaḍāʾ* and *fidyah*, and finally according to Mālikī in the form of *qaḍāʾ* and *fidyah* (but this is valid only for the nursing woman, not the pregnant). Meanwhile, menstruating women and women who just have given birth (up till forty days after childbirth, a period known as *nifās*) may under no conditions fast (it would be *ḥarām*).

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[204] E.g., ḤA 12,1207; ḤB 3,31,158; 7,64,281; ḤM 6,2457. Note also that the Ḥanafī school of law does not demand that the slave is a Muslim, and that the Ḥanbalī school accepts a break of the two months long fast due to traveling (which the others do not).

[205] al-Jaziri 1995: 110f.

[206] This discussion is exclusively based on al-Jaziri 1995: 94-104 and al-Zuhayly 1995: 208-225.

Traveling Muslims constitute another group that may break the fast under certain conditions, that is, if the length of the travel exceeds 89 kilometers, and if the travel is commenced before the break of dawn. According to the Ḥanbalī *madhhab*, travelers who begun their journey during the day may, however, break the fast (though it would be better to continue fasting). Shāfiᶜī *ᶜulamāᵓ* add yet another condition, namely that these conditions are not valid for people whose work includes constant traveling. Should a traveler who begun his journey after sunrise break his fast, the Ḥanbalī, Ḥanafī and Mālikī *madhāhib* hold that he has to *qaḍā*, but need not *kaffārah*. On the other hand, according to Shāfiᶜī scholars, such a fast breaker will have to both *qaḍāᵓ* and *kaffārah* if he broke the fast by means which generally demand this, while *qaḍāᵓ* is enough if he broke his fast by means which only demand that. Another difference concerns the intention: according to Mālikī scholars, someone who has already stated his intention to fast and then breaks it will have to both *qaḍāᵓ* and *kaffārah*, whereas Ḥanafī scholars hold that *qaḍāᵓ* is enough (though to break the fast in this condition is *ḥarām*). According to Shāfiᶜī and Ḥanbalī, the stated intent does not mean that a traveler may not break the fast. Finally, all *ᶜulamāᵓ* agree that it is *ḥarām* to fast during travels if one is seriously worried about one's health.

Even persons who are extremely hungry and thirsty may break their fasts if they worry about their health. Later, they will have to *qaḍāᵓ*, however. Persons who, by one or another reason, turn insane do not need to fast, but the four legal schools differ in regards to the obligation to *qaḍāᵓ*. Elderly Muslims unable to perform the fast need not fast, neither do they need to *qaḍāᵓ* if they regard their situation not probable to render possible fasting before the next Ramadan. They will, however, need to pay *fidyah*. Further, a Muslim with employment that makes fasting difficult does not need to fast, with the note, however, that if he or she leaves that employment his or her life will become endangered. If it will not, they have to leave their present employment and perform the fast. (People not fasting due to employment issues will, however, need to pronounce their intent to fast and also to wake up for the *ṣahūr* meal.)

SOME CONCLUDING REMARKS

This chapter has dealt with the Koran and *aḥādīth* generally, and what is said about Ramadanic fasting in them more specifically. It has also touched upon the position of these texts in Javanese contemporary society, and on some differences between the four major legal schools in regard to the fourth pillar of Islam.

As should have become clear from the above discussion, the bulk of the theoretical/scriptural fundament for the practice of fasting within Islam is to

be found in the collections of traditions and in the *fiqh* literature, whereas the Koran only holds a few verses touching upon the subject. A relationship of this kind between *aḥādīth* and *fiqh* literature on the one hand and the Koran on the other is not specific to Ramadan and fasting; indeed, the vast literature the collections of traditions make up, may be regarded as legally valid comments (in the eyes of believing Muslims, at least) on the divine word as embodied in the Book. A (nationally) well-known Indonesian scholar, Harun Nasution (d. 1998), has thus stated that the Koran only gives the basic Islamic principles and teachings, whereas it gives few or none detailed descriptions about the practical performance of these basics.[207] And this way of reasoning seems to be suitable for our understanding of the practice of fasting within the Islamic tradition—the fundamental basics are laid down in the Koran, whereas we have to consult the *ḥadīth* literature together with the legal works for additional details. But even the Koranic verses need to be approached with a pinch of healthy carefulness, since we in the text itself find statements that emphasize the fact that some of its verses have a clear and unambiguous meaning (A. *āyātun muḥkamāt*), whereas others hold the opposite position and thus are to be understood allegorically (A. *āyātun mutashābihāt*).[208] Furthermore, it is generally said that only about eight percent of the 6236 verses of the Koran have a legal character. Nevertheless, we can from these textual sources roughly imagine how an ideal Muslim (individual or community) should behave in relation to Ramadan and the practice of fasting. That is, we can get a normative picture of this practice.

But we cannot, however, expect that the sociological reality in any Muslim society would perfectly reflect these written, 'orthodox' sources, and this, of course, stems from a variety of reasons. One reason is that however vast the *ḥadīth* and *fiqh* literature may be, it is still far from exhaustive. Inevitably, loads of human behavior is not commented upon in these texts, and this necessitates extrapolation and individual interpretation. Another reason would be that only small portions of any given society are familiar with this literature, and even between those familiar with it, differences of opinion are bound to exist—in part, perhaps, due to some ambiguities found in the literature. A third reason to deny a perfectly mirroring relationship between orthodox text and sociological reality is that it would also deny the factor of human imagination and creativity. As will be seen in what follows, that cannot easily be done.

Anyhow, this chapter has outlined the theoretical basics of Muslims' relations to fasting and the month of Ramadan, based on the Koran, the prophet's *sunnah*, and the positions of the law schools. With this background we may now proceed to discuss contemporary Ramadanic media in Indonesia.

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[207] Nasution 2001: 32.
[208] QS 3:7. Cf. Kinberg 1999.

CHAPTER FOUR

WRITTEN RAMADAN

CONTEMPORARY AND POPULAR INDONESIAN MEDIA EXPRESSIONS

Muslim local scholarship has been—and still is—the subject of an amazingly comprehensive Western academic neglect or disparagement. Monographs and anthologies of various 'Muslim people' and their behavior are published each and every day in Europe and North America, but it is all too common that these works contain neither references to—let alone discussions of—local scholarship. Taking into consideration that the Islamic civilization has a long and continuous history of scholarship in a wide variety of subjects, this is surely unfortunate. Not only do we by this neglect miss out on a great deal of valuable knowledge, we also sustain a colonial misperception of the inability of the studied 'subjects' to observe and study their own religion and traditions, simultaneously as we nourish the dated notion of the superiority of the West. With the 'fragmentation'[1] or 'dissemination'[2] of religious authority in the twentieth century, we have even more reasons to seriously approach local

[1] The term 'fragmentation of authority' is Eickelman's (1999: 37). He states that "It [this fragmentation of authority]... multiplies the ways in which authority can be represented and by whom. 'Islamic' books and cassette sermons set aside the long tradition of authoritative discourse by religious scholars, so that chemists, medical doctors, journalists, and even garage mechanics, for example, can interpret 'Islamic' principles as equals with scholars who have graduated from the schools of the *ʿulama.* This multiplication of voices in public discussion of religious and political belief further erodes the boundaries between kinds or sources of authoritative speech" (1999: 37f.). Similar ideas were put forward by Norton (1999: 19f, *idem.*), Eickelman & Anderson (1999a), and others in the same edited volume (Eickelman & Anderson 1999b).

[2] I refer here to the research program 'Islam in Indonesia: The Dissemination of Religious Authority in the 20th century' presently conducted at the *International Institute for Asian Studies* [http://www.iias.nl] in Leiden. This program, embracing several PhD students as well as post-docs, will be concluded after four years in August 2005.

Muslim scholarship, since it is the works from such a tradition that 'ordinary Muslims'[3] have come to read and rely on. A 'modern' lifestyle, (partially) adopted by Indonesians in great numbers, hardly gives room to any lengthy and recurring sessions with local *ulama*; instead, various forms of popular media may fill that place. Especially Ramadan is a month in which reading and studying is encouraged, something which a poll made by the daily newspaper *Kompas* during Ramadan 2002 emphasized. It was shown in this poll that as much as 56% of the respondents read more Islamic literature during Ramadan than during other months (only 3% lessened their reading). Moreover, 72% stated that they preferred Indonesian authors, whereas less than 8% rather enjoined works of foreign scholars.[4]

This chapter does not confirm to the presupposition that local scholarship does not need to be considered in academic treatises; rather, it constitutes a contribution to a needed shift of focus in this respect, in that it is fully devoted to Indonesian contemporary and popular media of various kinds: monographs, articles, songs, poems, and TV-shows. As we are dealing with 'texts' of local authors here, and as we are eager to let these authors become perceptible in the following passages, numerous—and at times lengthy—quotes have been included below. I believe this to be a necessity, in that I regard textual studies without such quotes to be quite unfortunate and unattractive enterprises. In translating the relevant passages, I have striven to satisfy both the general reader and the more specialized counterpart. In weighing the alternatives, I decided finally to keep the text proper as close to regular English as possible, whereas the linguistically interested reader will have to consult the footnotes for the original Indonesian, Arabic, or Javanese. When we are dealing with only one or a couple of words, however, the original is provided within parentheses. In addition to the Indonesian quotes, the reader will also find recurring Koranic passages below. As strange as it may be to write a treatise on Muslims without reference to local scholarship, even stranger is it to deny any Koranic presence in such a text; nevertheless, it is all but uncommon.

As the title of this chapter suggests, what will occupy us below are contemporary and popular Indonesian works. Their contemporaneousness is constituted by the fact that the great majority of them were published during the late 1990s or early 2000s (fittingly, this also corresponds to the time of my sojourn in Indonesia). Availability of written material in Java rapidly decreases with the coming of age of the works (i.e. some years), and this contributed to me choosing material from the period mentioned. During a stay in Leiden, I later found some comparable publications from other dec-

[3] With 'ordinary Muslims' I have in mind people similar to those described by Horvatich (1997), Peletz (1997), and Rössler (1997) in their articles in *Islam in an Era of Nation-States: Politics and Religious Renewal in Southeast Asia* (Hefner & Horvatich 1997). See also the discussion of this in the introduction above.

[4] *Kompas* 2002-11-23.

ades (primarily the 1970s and the 1980s), but they were so similar to the ones published around the new millennium that I found no reasons for making them the subject of a special section here, thus providing historical comparisons. (Occasional references to these works are present, however.) At this occasion in Leiden I also read through some newspapers (*Kompas*) on microfilm from the 1960s, but there existed at that time nothing like the *opini* articles we will discuss below. Thus, the scope has been limited to contemporary material. Apart from contemporary, the material chosen here is also popular—in the sense that it was readily available and intended for 'ordinary Muslims.' Indeed, all the books, articles, songs, poems, sermons, and TV shows to be considered here were written, sung, composed, and delivered both by and for Muslims, and consequently exclusively arranged according to Muslim interests. We are thus not dealing with more specialized or peripheral material here, but rather with popular media from which hardly any Indonesian—Muslim or not—can escape during Ramadan. This media I refer to as 'cultural brokers,' a discussion of which can be found elsewhere in this work.

RAMADANIC HANDBOOKS

There is in Indonesia a book for virtually every subject conceivable. As handbooks are particularly popular, it is possible to become a rather skilled autodidact in various areas of learning in Indonesia, should sufficient amounts of time and *rupiah* be spent.[5] Any Indonesian bookstore with some self-esteem will be able to present handbooks on topics ranging from the breeding of Australian rabbits to the correct performance of the Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca (A. *ḥajj*). There is no shortage of Ramadanic handbooks in Java. These all present practical guiding through the thickets of Ramadan, and offer pragmatic advice on fasting for Javanese Muslims. This preoccupation with the practical side of Ramadanic fasting they all exhibit, makes it plausible to speak of ritual manuals, although this would bear the risk of unjustifiably undermine and cripple their discussions on the boons (I. *hikmah*) of Ramadan, as well as its excellence (I. *keutamaan*) and extraordinariness (I. *keistimewaan*). Nevertheless, one is struck by the minimal theological discussions they contain. I argue that there is simply little need to concentrate upon the theological underpinnings of Ramadan in these works, due to the fact that the imagined reader already is a convinced Muslim, and thus neither in need of sound arguments for fasting (which s/he already knows of), nor of theological basics (which s/he has already accepted). Background faith is taken for granted then, one could say, as are the truth claims of the Koran and

[5] I, for one, did for example eventually become a quite qualified breeder of Siamese fighting fish (Latin, *betta splendens*, I. *cupang*), with my backyard in Yogyakarta crowded with aquariums and fry.

the validity of the prophet's *sunnah*. True, these handbooks do present the pillars (I. *rukun*) and prerequisites (I. *syarat*) of fasting, but even this is done in a very practical matter. What is emphasized primarily in these works are thus questions pertaining to *what*, *how*, and *when* to do something in Ramadan, and only secondarily to questions of *why* to do just that. When Koranic and *ḥadīthic* quotes are inserted into the text—which they frequently are—it is not primary to bring theological justification and legitimacy to a certain practice, but rather to make the reader understand the precise and correct way of carrying it out.

The preoccupation with the practical sides of Ramadan and the relative silence on theological matters these Ramadanic handbooks present, have larger theoretical implications than one may first fancy. By reading these works, the arguments of Tord Olsson concerning the relationship between religion, faith, and ritual become relevant. Olsson has argued that there has been an unfounded conviction among scholars in the field of religious studies that religion first and foremost is about faith and belief, and only secondarily about rituals. This, he says, is due partly to the scholars' own intellectual and Protestant background—in which the primacy of faith is undisputed—and partly to the fact that these scholars have generally preferred to study texts that are marked by the same intellectuality and concern for (correct) faith. Hence, the academic view of religion has come to be that entity with which scholars of religion are concerned, and this has predominantly been questions pertaining to faith and belief.[6] That ritual practice actually may form the backbone for religious conviction—and that this even may be referred to by the adherents of a specific religion themselves—has consequently been largely ignored.[7] These insights of Olsson have wide applicability in the Muslim world. In Java, religious affiliation is hardly discussed in terms of the religious convictions individuals hold, but rather in terms of what they practically do. To perform ritual prayer or to fast during Ramadan are the two most commonly mentioned practices used for defining religious adherence in Java—and more precisely *how* one performs them—and we are thus compelled to talk about 'orthopraxy' rather than 'orthodoxy' in the case of Islam.[8] Even in the proclamation of faith itself (I. *syahadat*, A. *shahādah*), more stress is generally put on the correct pronunciation and ritual purity of the articulator, than on the theological essence of what is about to be stated. In retrospect then, Muslims put more stress—in their search of worldly and otherworldly divine rewards—on doing things properly, than on holding 'correct' beliefs, and this is why we should not be too perplexed by the ritualistic orientation of the Indonesian Ramadan handbooks to be discussed here.

These Ramadanic handbooks have for our purposes a two-fold interest. Firstly, we will regard these monographs as what I have referred to above as

[6] Olsson 2000: 27f. See also Bell 1997: 191 and Smith 1979: 13ff.
[7] Olsson 2000: 17. See also Olsson 1999: 77, *idem*.
[8] Smith 1957: 20. Bell (1997: 191ff) has moreover shown that this is not peculiar to Islam.

'cultural brokers.' This means that we will understand them as possible mediators between 'normative Islam' and its 'lived' or 'practical' equivalent. (Note that they are of course to be regarded as specific *Indonesian* mediators.) The second reason why these fasting guides are interesting is that they can tell us a great deal about Ramadanic rituals: *what* they look like, *when* they are to be performed, and *how* one is to carry them out. It might be that some readers ponder upon the reasons I chose to include such a discussion here—and such a long one too—, and this is understandable taking into consideration the general and well-established neglect of Islamic rituals in academic studies. Precisely because this is such a disregarded area of study, I will devote some energy to it here, and hopefully show that Islamic rituals are both insufficiently understood by non-Muslims and highly interesting.

FIVE RITUAL MANUALS PRESENTED

Our primary material in this section on Ramadanic handbooks is made up of five monographs, all of which were bought in popular bookstores (as opposed to more specialized Islamic ones) in Yogyakarta during or just prior to the month of fasting in 2002/1423. What follows below is a presentation of these five works (in alphabetical order, arranged after author). I should here remind the reader that there exists several translated (from Arabic) works in Indonesia concerning Ramadan, but we will not concern ourselves with these here.

The first work to be considered here is entitled *Keistimewaan dan Hikmah Ramadan* (I., The Extraordinariness and Boons of Ramadan) and was co-authored by Abu Ahmadi and Joko Tri Prasetya.[9] About the authors and the publisher there is not much information available, and the only thing one can state with any certainty is that Abu Ahmadi has authored, or co-authored, several books on Islam, and that he has an apparent predilection for educational issues. The work itself, published for the first time in 2000, covers approximately 170 pages, and was sold for the price of Rp. 13,800.[10] The front cover hosts a bluish (indicating dawn?) photograph of a minaret, together with the text of the title and the names of the authors. The text is palatably arranged, with legible Arabic and Roman typefaces on fine-quality paper. As for the aim of the book, a quote from the publisher's preface is illuminating:

> This book, *The Extraordinariness and Boons of Ramadan*, clarifies the rituals (I. *ibadah-ibadah*) that the Muslim community may perform during Ramadan. And not only the obligatory ones, but also the voluntary (I. *sunahnya*) equivalents. Moreover, as a deepening of our understanding of Ramadan, it also tells about the context

[9] Ahmadi & Prasetya 2000.

[10] At the time of purchase one US dollar equaled approximately Rp. 9,000. Rp. 13,800 would thus be around USD 1,50.

> of Ramadan and about issues we should be knowingly of when performing our Ramadanic rituals (I. *beribadah di bulan Ramadan*).
>
> With good intentions, the publisher hereby invites the reader to become able to feel the light (I. *cahaya*) and solemnity (I. *khidmat*) of the holy Ramadan, in order to let it illuminate our post-Ramadanic days. Of course, with the hope that we will be given the opportunity to experience the coming Ramadan.
>
> *Amin ya Rabbal'alamin* [Let it be so, Lord of the worlds].[11]

As is symptomatic of Indonesian scholarship, the list of references is an exiguous piece of work, whereas the references within the text are characterized by a scarcity of information. In the many cases where *aḥādīth* are quoted, references are generally only made to the collector of the tradition, a practice which ensures some work for those eager to consult the 'original' sources. Most of the traditions quoted stem from the 'six books' (A. *al-kuttubu s-sitta*) mentioned above (chapter 2), but there are also frequent references to, for example, Baihaqi (Bayhaqī), Ahmad (Aḥmad), Ibnu Hibban (Ibn Ḥibbān), and Ibnu Khuzaimah (Ibn Khuzaymah). There is no *ḥadīth* criticism whatsoever.

The work is divided into eighth chapters following a rather conventional understanding of Ramadan. Special mention should, however, be made of the one odd chapter in the book, that is, chapter three: 'Fasting According to Modern Science' (I., *Puasa Menurut Ilmu Penegtahuan Modern*). We are here presented with 'scientific research' in which a group of people—including pregnant women and non-fasting Indonesians—has undergone several tests. Tables concerning changes in weight, blood sugar, and amount of urine secreted per day are drawn up, just to come to the conclusion that Ramadanic fasting guards over both spiritual (I. *rohani*) and bodily (I. *jasmani*) health.[12] In its last chapter, the book's status as a ritual manual is reinforced as it presents a section with important supplications (I. *doa-doa penting*) and an example of a sermon to be delivered at the end of the month (I. *contoh khutbah hari raya Idul Fitri*).

The second work to be presented here has more the character of a pamphlet than a book, with its thirty-two pages. It is entitled *Selamat Datang Bulan Romadhon* (I., Welcome, Month of Ramadan), and given the subtitle *Dilengkapi dengan Sholat Tarawieh, Sholat Witir, Sholat Hari raya & Do'a-do'a* (I. Complemented with [how to perform] *Tarawieh* prayer, *Witir* prayer, *Hari Raya* prayer & [how to pronounce the] supplications).[13] It was written by Ust. Labib Mz, whose initial abbreviation should read *ustadz* (I., A. *ustādh*), and thus be short for 'religious teacher.' Again, not much is known to me about Labib, but he too has published several books on Islamic topics in Indonesia, including a pilgrimage (I. *ziarah*) handbook referred to elsewhere in this thesis. The pamphlet, which was published in Surabaya, East

[11] *Penerbit* ['publisher,' anonymous] 2000: v.
[12] Ahmadi & Prasetya 2000: 86.
[13] Labib n.d. These different prayers will be discussed below.

Java, does unfortunately not state the year of publication, but it is probable that it is of rather recent date, taking into consideration that at least one of his other works were published for the first time in 2000.[14] It was sold in Yogyakarta for the petty sum of Rp. 500, and we should not be surprised that it is coarsely printed on brownish paper. A short quote from the author's own preface throws some light on the aim of the work:

> I wrote this book in order to offer a contribution to the readers who want study the real fast (I. *puasa yang sebenarnya*) that will be accepted by the side of Allah later. [...] Whoever does not perform it [the Ramadanic fast] will be threatened by a very painful torture (I. *siksa yang sangat pedih*). [...] I hope this book will be useful and receive blessings (I. *ridho*) by the side of Allah, Praise be unto the Almighty. Amen.[15]

This ritual manual, whose longest part is concerned with the correct performance of the *tarawih* prayers, does consequently have a rather stiff aim: to save mankind from the tortures of hell.

The front cover is quite interesting: just above the title we find the text *marḥabān yā Ramaḍān* (A., Welcome, O Ramadan) written in Arabic script, and below it there is a colorful drawing of a small family. This family—consisting of a veiled woman, a fez wearing man, and their approximately ten-year-old son—is pictured as sitting around the dinner table, which hosts nothing but a large plate of white rice. They are all having their palms facing upwards as if they are saying some supplication before they will begin to eat, and the time of the scene is naturally either before sunrise or just after sunset, since eating is allowed. This drawing actually conveys a picture of the ideal New Order family: small, pious, and satisfied with little.

There are no references whatsoever in the book, although there is a wide range of traditions quoted, and neither is there any bibliography or suggestions for further reading. Finally, the work is divided into fifteen sections, almost all of which seemingly have as their aim to provide practical Ramadanic advice. Its status as a ritual manual thus becomes hard to dispute.

The third work is entitled *Penuntun Ibadah Puasa* (I., A Guidebook for the Fast) and was published in Jakarta for the first time in 2001.[16] About its author, Romdoni Muslim, nothing is known to me more than that which his title (*S.Ag,* or *Sarjana Agama*) tells, i.e. that he has a degree in religious studies. This monograph, which covers approximately 150 pages, was sold for the price of Rp. 14,500, and is printed on slightly yellowish paper with a commonplace typeface. The front cover is dominated by the title on a background of various Arabic writings and forms (signaling a mosque?), whereas the back cover gives room to an anonymously written and highly interesting text which tells the direction of the book:

[14] Labib 2000.
[15] Labib n.d.: 2.
[16] Muslim 2001.

> Fasting, as one of Allah's orders, surely contains many boons for humankind. It can heal (I. *menyehatkan*) us bodily and spiritually. [It can also] strengthen our wishes, teach about the values of humanity and our caring for the social welfare. And fasting [also] teaches humankind to be obedient (I. *taat*) and to fulfill our obligations.
>
> It is said that the meaning of fasting is to suppress the enemy of Allah, that is Satan (I. *syaitan*). Indeed, satan's instrument is [nothing but] lustful desires (I. *nafsu syahwat*). And such lustful desires can remain strong by our constant eating and drinking. So, by fasting our lustful desires and satan can be destroyed (I. *dihancurkan*) and defeated (I. *dikalahkan*).
>
> Fasting frees humankind from the slavery and shackles of our lustful desires and satan. And by fasting people will become able to control the flaring up of the wills of our lustful desires.

In the author's short preface, it is stated that the book constitutes nothing but a concise and simple manual (I. *pedoman ringkas dan sederhana*), and that anyone searching for a deeper understanding of Ramadan will have to consult the books of previous religious scholars (I. *kitab-kitab para ulama terdahulu*).[17]

The work is divided into nine major chapters. The two largest ones are those providing ritual guiding concerning the supererogatory *tarawih* prayers (chapter two), and the likewise supererogatory *witir* prayers (chapter three). To get rid of any suspicions that we are not dealing with a ritual manual here, the two last chapters provide short Koranic verses to be interiorized during the holy month (chapter eighth), and a compilation of suitable supplications (chapter nine). As in the previously mentioned works, references are held to a minimum in this book too, and in those cases references are given to *ḥadīthic* material, these are confined to the names of the collectors. In most instances, however, references are totally lacking.

The most voluminous work—some 360 pages—to be considered here is that written by Teungku Muhammad Hasbi Ash-Shiddieqy (d. 1975) entitled *Pedoman Puasa* (I., Fasting Manual).[18] This manual was published first in 1973, and has since been reprinted three times in two editions (all references here are to the fourth printing, second edition, 2000). It is part of a larger series of 'ritual guides'—all written by Ash-Shiddieqy—in which we find titles such as *Pedoman Sholat* (I., Manual for Ritual Prayer), *Pedoman Hajj* (I., Pilgrimage Manual), and *Pedoman Dzikir dan Doa* (I., Manual for *Dhikr* and Supplications). Ash-Shiddieqy has also published books with titles as *Memahami Syariat Islam* (I., Understanding Islamic Law), *Sejarah dan Pengantar Ilmu Hadits* (I., A History of and Introduction to the Study of Traditions), and a Koranic *tafsir*.[19] Summed up, he has published some 70 books and 50 articles on Islamic topics, according to the two-page 'About the Author' that is anonymously reprinted at the back of the book. Here one can also

[17] Muslim 2001: iii.
[18] Ash-Shiddieqy 2000.
[19] Ash-Shiddieqy has also published a work entitled *Awal dan Akhir Ramadhan: Mengapa Harus Berbeda?* (I., The Beginning and End of Ramadan: Why Do We Have to Differ?) which we will have reason to return to later (Ash-Shiddieqy 2001).

read that Ash-Shiddieqy was born in Aceh, North Sumatra, in 1904, and that he can trace his descent through thirty-three generations directly to the first caliph, Abū Bakr. Ash-Shiddieqy held memberships in both Muhammadiyah and Persatuan Islam (the two largest modernist organizations in Indonesia), it is further stated, and was an early and controversial propagator for the need of an 'Indonesianization' of Islam in the archipelago. His (slightly ambiguous) modernist orientation will become apparent later in this chapter.

The aesthetical quality of the text is quite uneven: sometimes fine and legible, sometimes rough and indistinct—and this goes for both the Arabic and the Roman characters. The front cover is sparsely designed with the title and name of the author on a background of a clear blue sky, whereas the back cover, again, presents an anonymously written text:

> Many people among us perform the fast without realizing the meaning of it, and without consulting guides and manuals that should be obeyed. [...] This book (I. *kitab*) clearly explains what is obligatory to do [in Ramadan], and gives additional knowledge about the pillars (I. *rukun*), the prerequisites (I. *syarat*), the recommended [acts] (I. *mandub*), the reprehensible [acts] (I. *makruh*), the correct behavior (I. *adab*), the use (I. *manfaat*), the secrets (I. *rahasia*), and the boons (I. *hikmah*) of fasting.

This work, which I bought for the price of Rp. 23,000, is furthermore the only of those considered here that entitles itself as a work of *fiqh* (I., A. jurisprudence).[20] Nevertheless, it is ritual advice that calls for the most space in the monograph.

As for the references in the work of Ash-Shiddieqy, it is as uneven as the quality of the text mentioned above: sometimes the readers are given complete references with page number to relevant collections of traditions, whereas sometimes there is no hint at all. For Western readers this is highly annoying, but it is my experience that it is very few ordinary Javanese who care about footnotes and references in the first place.

The last Ramadanic handbook to be presented here is entitled *Nuansa Ramadhan: Puasa & Lebaran* (I., A Nuance of Ramadan: Fasting & the Feast Concluding the Fast), and was written by Achmad Suyuti.[21] This man, born in 1954, has a degree from the state-run IAIN (*Institut Agama Islam Negeri*) in Yogyakarta, and serves as both teacher of Islam and head of a *madrasah* (I., religious school) in Pekalongan, Central Java. Apart from this book, he has also published two compilations of Friday sermons.

Nuansa Ramadhan was published in 1996, and does not really share with the other works mentioned here a character of ritual manual, but could rather be depicted as a philosophical reflection over Ramadan. Nevertheless, there is included a couple of *Lebaran* sermons at the end of the book, reflecting the author's general interest. In his preface, Suyuti states that:

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[20] Ash-Shiddieqy 2000: vii.
[21] Suyuti 1996.

> This book rolls out the author's musing (I. *renungan*) about Ramadan, fasting, and *Lebaran*. [...] ...a Muslim cannot be grateful (I. *mensyukuri*) for the blessings of faith (I. *iman*) and Islam as Allah's greatest gifts (I. *karunia*), without him realizing the boons (I. *hikmah*) of the ritual he is performing. And the essence of the ritual bliss may only be understood by those whose hearts are open, that is those who have a feeling for the spiritual life (I. *kehidupan rohaniah*), included among them is the ability to feel the grandeur of Ramadan, the grace of fasting, and the beauty of *Lebaran*.[22]

This then—i.e., to make the readers become able to feel the grandeur of Ramadan, the grace of fasting, and the beauty of *Lebaran*—is the overall aim of the work, which commanded a price of Rp. 12,000. The front cover hosts Javanese Islamic symbols in the form of small *ketupat* (J.) and a drum accompanied by a couple of drumsticks. The *ketupat* is a kind of rice cake boiled in a box of plaited coconut leaves, which is an immensely popular dish during *Lebaran* in Java. (Indeed, *ketupat* sometimes works synonymously with *Lebaran.*) The drum, on the other hand, symbolizes the drums (J. *bedug*) which are still used in (traditionalist) mosques in Java to summon people to the mosque, in addition to the regular call to prayer (I. *adzan*, A. *adhān*). In line with the other works presented above, there are no references—except Koranic—whatsoever in this book.

RAMADAN: BOONS AND SECRETS, EXTRAORDINARINESS AND EXCELLENCE

Apart from being the only month to be mentioned in the Koran,[23] Ramadan has several 'nicknames' which all hint at the grandeur of this month. Ash-Shiddieqy gives the following eleven names in Arabic transliteration with an Indonesian explanation:[24]

1. *Syahrullahi* [shahru llāh], *Bulan Allah* [The month of God]
2. *Syahrul ala-i* [shahru l-ᶜalā], *Bulan yang penuh kenikmatan dan limpahan karunia* [The month full of enjoyment and blessings]
3. *Syahrul Qur'an* [shahru l-qurʾān], *Bulan yang di dalamnya diturunkan permulaan Al Qur'an* [The month in which the beginning of the Koran was revealed]
4. *Syahrul Najah* [shahru n-najāḥ], *Bulan pelepasan dari azab neraka* [The month of deliverance from the torments of hell]
5. *Syahrul Jud* [shahru l-jūd], *Bulan memberikan keihlasan kepada sesama manusia dan melimpahkan bantuan kepada fakir miskin atau bulan bermurah tangan* [The month in which (we) give sincerely to our fellows and bestow our help unto the poor, or the generous month]
6. *Syahrul Muwasah* [shahr al-muwasah], *Bulan memberikan pertolongan kepada yang berhajat* [The month which gives help to those having wishes]

[22] Suyuti 1996: v.

[23] QS 2:185: "The month of Ramaḍān in which the Qurʾān was [first] bestowed from on high as a guidance unto man and as a self-evident proof of that guidance..."

[24] Conventional transliteration of the Arabic has been added within brackets, as has an English translation of the Indonesian.

7. *Syahrut Tilawah* [shahru t-tilāwah], *Bulan membaca Al-Qur'an atau bulan menekunkan diri untuk memahami makna Al-Qur'an* [The month for reading the Koran, or for occupying oneself with the task of understanding the meaning of the Koran]
8. *Syahrush Shabri* [shahru ṣ-ṣabr], *Bulan melatih diri bersabar dalam melaksanakan tugas-tugas agama, sabar terhadap ujian hidup dengan ridla hati* [The month for training oneself to become patient in performing the religious assignments, (and to become) patient in facing life willingly]
9. *Syahrush Shiyam* [shahru ṣ-ṣiyām], *Bulan puasa* [The month of fasting]
10. *Syahrur Rahmah* [shahru r-raḥmah], *Bulan Allah limpahkan Rahmat-Nya kepada hamba-Nya* [The month in which Allah shower His servants with His grace]
11. *Syahrul 'id* [shahru l-ᶜīd], *Bulan yang merayakan hari berbuka* [The month which celebrates the breaking (of the fast)][25]

This rendering—which constitutes one of many—gives us an initial understanding of the position of the month of fasting in the hearts of Muslims: it is God's month, and as such it can bear nothing but goodness. This brings us to the many boons of the holy Ramadan, together with its extraordinary and excellent qualities and characteristics. These are topics with which much of Suyuti's *Nuansa Ramadhan* is—confusingly and inconsistently, but nevertheless—concerned. He states, for example, that there are three extraordinary qualities (I. *keistimewaan*) of Ramadan: the first of these is made up of the fact that Ramadan was the month in which the Koran was revealed to Muhammad and humankind; the second is Ramadan in its quality as a month for cleansing (I. *pensucian*) of the self; and the final extraordinariness of Ramadan is that it is a month for worship (I. *ibadah*).[26] The first *keistimewaan* he refers, of course, to QS 2:185 (quoted above), but does not comment upon the question whether the whole Koran was revealed during Ramadan, or if the revelation 'merely' was begun during this month, and neither has he anything to say about the date of this event. About the second, he says that Ramadan is a month in which the Islamic community is taught to cleanse its innermost (I. *mensucikan batin*), and that honorable deeds will be the result of such a purified inner (I. *batin yang suci*). He also quotes a tradition, in which the prophet refers to the paying of *zakat* (I., tithe, A. *zakāh*) as a cleanser (I. *pembersih*), but avoids elaborating on this topic. What one notes here is a Sufi influence on Suyuti's why of discussing, in that he makes a distinction between *batin* (I., inner, A. *bāṭin*) and *lahir* (I., outer, A. *ẓāhir*), and speaks of a "cleansing of our innermost from worldly filth" (I. *membersihkan batin kita dari kotoran-kotoran duniawi*), as one of the aims of Ramadanic fasting. That Ramadan is a month for worship is explained by the fact that Muhammad devoted himself even more than usual to various religious rituals during the month of fasting, something which in turn is dependent on the divine promise that these deeds will be rewarded according to a special Ramadanic scale.

[25] Ash-Shiddieqy 2000: 13f. Note that the breaking of the fast actually takes place in the month of Syawal. Ahmadi & Prasetya (2000: 25ff) provide a slightly different list.
[26] Suyuti 1996: 13f.

Worship should not be understood too narrowly, according to Suyuti, who choose to speak about both ritual worship (I. *ibadah ritual*) and social worship (I. *ibadah sosial*).[27] Worship thus has a twofold aim: to guard over one's relationship with God (I. *hablum minallah*, A. *ḥablu mina llāh*), and to guard over one's relationship with one's fellows (I. *hablum minannas*, A. *ḥablu mina n-nās*). As such, everything a Muslim does—or intends to do—can be regarded as worship in one sense or the other, and this idea is backed up by a Koranic quote: "Say: 'Behold, my prayer, and [all] my acts of worship, and my living and my dying are for God [alone], the Sustainer of all the worlds.'"[28] Indeed, if the Muslim community thinks that worship is confined to religious rituals only, then it will soon witness its own demise.[29]

Ahmadi & Prasetya choose to speak of five Ramadanic extraordinary qualities, and they do this based on a *hadits* which they quote in full and refer to the collections of Baihaqi, Ahmad, and Al-Bazar. The proposed qualities of Ramadan are here as follows: first, at the beginning of the month of fasting, Allah will see (A. *yanẓuru llāh*) all human beings (intending to fast?), and people who have been spotted by God will never become subjects of divine torments. Secondly, the breath of a fasting person is dearer to God than the smell of musk, whereas, thirdly, the angels (A. *al-malāʾikah*) will ask for the fasting people's forgiveness (A. *yastaghfirlahum*) day and night. Fourthly, fasting Muslims will be rewarded with heaven (A. *jannah*), and, finally, have their sins forgiven by God (A. *ghufuru llāh*) each night during Ramadan.[30] The basic difference with the Ramadanic qualities proposed by Suyuti is then that Ahmadi & Prasetya clearly ground their arguments in an authorizing tradition of the prophet. This is something they also note themselves in that they state that the five Ramadanic extraordinary qualities they have proposed cannot be added to by means of "myths, local traditions, the plagiarizing of spiritual movements, or other non-Islamic teachings."[31] However, outside these five qualities, they also confusingly propose eleven boons and excellent qualities (I. *hikmah dan keutamaan*) for the practice of fasting, and four of these for the month of Ramadan.[32] Even more perplexing is the fact that not all of these—though a majority—are given Koranic or *ḥadīthic* references and support. The fifth proposed boon of fasting, for example, is said to be that it teaches humankind to develop feelings of compassion for the poor people of society, since by fasting everyone can feel the hardships of not eating and drinking.[33] Hence, the Ramadanic boon is that this month produces Muslims ever ready to provide for their economically unfortunate

[27] Suyuti 1996: 15.
[28] QS 6:162.
[29] Suyuti 1996: 17.
[30] Ahmadi & Prasetya 2000: 11ff.
[31] Ahmadi & Prasetya 2000: 13. *...dongeng, tradisi setempat, penjiplakan ajaran kebatinan, atau ajaran-ajaran lain yang ada di luar Islam.*
[32] Ahmadi & Prasetya 2000: 15-28.
[33] Ahmadi & Prasetya 2000: 17f.

brothers and sisters. This is indeed a very common understanding of Ramadan—and probably a quite 'valid' too—, but it is interesting that there are neither Koranic nor *ḥadīthic* references provided. But, as stated above, most of the boons and excellent qualities are provided with such references, by means of which the authors depict fasting as a way for combating satan, controlling lustful desires, making one's supplications heard, achieving one's entrance ticket to heaven, and so forth. As for the boons of Ramadan itself, especially one is worth mention here, and it is the one that pictures Ramadan as divided into three equally long parts—the first being a time for blessings (A. *raḥmah*), the middle a time for forgiveness (A. *maghfirah*), and the last for the releasing from the fire (A. *ʿitqun mina n-nār*).[34] This is a frequently cited *hadits* in Java during Ramadan.

When it comes to the boons and excellent characteristics of Ramadan, we have reasons to return to Suyuti. Apart from discussing the extraordinary qualities of Ramadan listed above, he also devotes considerable effort to other aspects of the holy month, some of which deserve to be mentioned here. In general terms, Suyuti is convinced that there behind the acts of restraining from food, drinks, and sexual relations during daytime, are stored elevated inner boons (I. *hikmah-hikmah batiniah yang tinggi*), again revealing his Sufi inclination. He is also of the determination that the success of our fasting is dependent upon our understanding of these boons.[35] He goes out to discern six major boons of Ramadanic fasting, the first of which is that fasting will result in the reaching of the state of *takwa*, as God has signaled in QS 2:183. The second boon is that fasting can function as a means for Muslims to express their gratitude towards God, whereas, and this is the third proposed boon, fasting will make Muslims come close to Allah and thus have their prayers answered. This he refers to QS 2:186:

> And if My servants ask thee about Me – behold, I am near, I respond to the call of him who calls, whenever he calls unto Me: let the, then respond unto Me, and be lieve in Me, so that they might follow the right way.

This verse, then, is connected to the other Koranic verses dealing with the Ramadanic fast, something that has not always been the case, as we saw in chapter three above.

The fourth, fifth, and sixth boons of Ramadan, as proposed by Suyuti, emerge if we look at the month of fasting from various angles: the educational-, health-, and social angles, to be precise. From an educational point of view, Ramadan will teach Muslims to become disciplined, trustworthy, just, and determined.[36] These characteristics—or rather, the lack of them— are frequently involved in discussions concerning the alleged backwardness (I. *keterbelakangan*) of the Indonesian nation, and it is thus probably rather

[34] Ahmadi & Prasetya 2000: 24f. They refer this tradition to Ibnu Khuzaimah and Sahman.
[35] Suyuti 1996: 71.
[36] Suyuti 1996: 72.

encouraging for Indonesian Muslims to learn that Islam, and more precisely fasting, can provide the nation with these sought-after qualities. As for questions concerning health, Suyuti quotes the prophet: *ṣūmū taṣiḥḥū*, "fast and you will be healthy."[37] Though this would probably not need further clarification, Suyuti still draws a parallel between Muhammad's impressive record of illness—he was allegedly only sick twice in his life, and the second of these times he also eventually passed away—and his habit of fasting. Moreover, Suyuti also states that fasting will make Muslims stay young—physically, mentally, and spiritually.[38] From the social angle, Suyuti simply says that fasting will give birth to spirits of sociality (I. *jiwa sosial*), and feelings of solidarity and togetherness (I. *kesetiakawanan dan kebersamaan*). But it does not stop here, says Suyuti, for there are still many boons of Ramadan to be discovered, one of which is that it is a month which "purifies the soul from godless whisperings" (I. *mensucikan jiwa dari bisikan-bisikan kefasikan*).[39] Moreover, Ramadan is a month for repentance (I. *pertobatan*, A. *taubah*) and one in which prayers are answered (I. *bulan ijabah*),[40] at the same time as it teaches us the virtues of muffling our desires (I. *bulan peredam nafsu*), living in simplicity (I. *hidup sederhana*), and developing our sense of patience (I. *mendidik kesabaran*).[41] Let us have a closer look at two of these Ramadanic boons as described by Suyuti.

In his discussion of fasting as a method of muffling one's desires, Suyuti makes the point several times that fasting is not only about controlling the outwardly desires, but also the inwardly. Hence, to abstain from eating, drinking, and having sexual relations during daytime is not enough to say that one has performed the fast satisfyingly. Indeed, if the fast stops at these practices, it has rarely touched the skin (I. *menyentuh kulitnya*) of real fasting, and definitely not reached its essence (I. *hakikat*). Fasting is not only *puasa lahir* (I., outwardly fasting) but also *puasa batin* (I., inwardly fasting), and as such Muslims need to stay away from whatever may pollute their faith, reduce their feeling of God-fear, or insult good morals.[42] This is in line with an oft-quoted tradition that has it that there are too many people fasting who gets nothing out of it more than hunger and thirst. As such, fasting could preferably be depicted as *jihad akbar* (I., greater struggle), since the enemy does not come from outside, but rather resides inside humans.[43] A lengthy quote from Suyuti sets the goal of Ramadanic fasting, and concludes the discussion of fasting as a way of muffling one's desires:

[37] Suyuti 1996: 75.
[38] Suyuti 1996: 78.
[39] Suyuti 1996: 73.
[40] Suyuti 1996: 29-51.
[41] Suyuti 1996: 89-116
[42] Suyuti 1996: 90.
[43] Suyuti 1996: 97.

> Basically, fasting might restrain several forms of desires and might also put to death our greedy wishes and characteristics. Fasting means that we try to pure our hearts, clean our bodies, drill our souls and bodies, always feel grateful for His blessings and enjoyments, give alms to the poor, take on a modest attitude, always appear in simplicity, and regret any action that does not call for the blessings of Allah.
>
> For the goal of fasting is to defeat our desires that are fooled by satan, to invite humans to draw closer to the Creator, to encourage them to always think positively, and to develop their potentials as vice regents [of God] to do good on the face of this world. If the fast is performed correctly, then it will be able to heighten the values of humanity, to calm down the souls [of the fasting Muslims], and to muffle all forms of pressure that squeeze them in their [daily] lives.[44]

The second of Suyuti's proposed boons to be shortly discussed here is that of Ramadan as a month for developing our sense of patience (I. *sabar*, A. *ṣabr*). The concept of *ṣabr* is highly praised in the Koran, which the following two quotes exemplify:

> Consider the flight of time!
> Verily, man is bound to loose himself
> unless he be of those who attain to faith, and do good works, and enjoin upon one another the keeping to truth, and enjoin upon one another patience in adversity.[45]

> And most certainly shall We try you by means of danger, and hunger, and loss of worldly goods, of lives and of [labour's] fruits. But give glad tidings unto those who are patient in adversity –
> who, when calamity befalls them, say, "Verily, unto God do we belong and, verily, unto Him we shall return.[46]

These and many other Koranic quotes, together with the prophetic tradition that says that fasting constitutes half of man's patience (A. *aṣ-ṣūmu niṣfu ṣ-ṣabr*),[47] thus constitute the basis for denoting Ramadan as a month in which this attitude is developed and put under test. Suyuti argues that it is virtually impossible to perform the Ramadanic fast infallibly, should the faster not be backed up by a substantial portion of patience, and as such *sabar* becomes a tool (I. *sarana*) for achieving *takwa*, which is the ultimate goal of fasting. But it is not a simple affair to keep patient during Ramadan; one of the toughest

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[44] Suyuti 1996: 98f. *Pada dasarnya puasa itu dapat mengendalikan berbagai bentuk dorongan nafsu dan dapat membunuh keinginan-keinginan diri serta sifat-sifat serakah. Berpuasa berarti kita berusaha untuk mensucikan hati, membersihkan anggota badan, melatih jiwa dan raga, selalu bersyukur atas rahmat dan nikmat-Nya, bersedekah kepada fakir miskin, bersikap rendah hati, dan selalu tampil sederhana, serta menyesali perbuatan yang tidak diridhai Allah. Sebab, tujuan puasa ialah untuk mengalahkan hawa nafsu yang selama ini dipermainkan oleh setan, guna mengajak manusia untuk mendekatkan diri kepada Sang Khalik dan memacu mereka untuk selalu berpikir positif, serta mampu mengembangkan potensi kekhalifannya untuk berbuat kebaikan di muka bumi. Puasa bila dilakukan dengan sebaik-baiknya akan dapat meninggikan nilai-nilai kemanusiaan serta dapat menenangkan jiwa mereka dan meredam segala bentuk tekanan kehidupan yang menghimpitnya.*

[45] QS 103.

[46] QS 2:155-156.

[47] Suyuti (1996: 107) refers this tradition to Turmudzi and Ibnu Majah.

aspects of Ramadanic fasting is indeed the needed attempt of emptying the soul from bodily desires (I. *mengosongkan jiwa dari nafsu badaniah*). Slowly but steadily, Suyuti encourages, these bodily inclinations will come under pressure and eventually only play a passive role in the human body.[48]

It is not always easy to determine when patience is called upon in the daily life of Muslims, and this incites Suyuti to present some different forms of *sabar.* To begin with, he refers to a tradition in which it is said that patience is of three sorts (A. *aṣ-ṣabru thalāthah*): patience due to a calamity (A. *ṣabr ᶜalā l-muṣībah*), patience in one's devotion to God (A. *ṣabr ᶜalā ṭ-ṭāᶜah*), and patience in avoiding immoralities (A. *ṣabr ᶜalā l-maᶜṣiyah*). But there are at least two more fundamental 'sorts' of patience, according to Suyuti, who consequently encourages his readers to also be patient in facing destiny (A. *ṣabr ᶜalā t-taqdīr*) and when receiving divine blessings (A. *ṣabr ᶜalā n-niᶜmah*).[49] The discussion is then concluded by the author encouraging his readers to regard the life-histories of the prophets, which all present both the need for patience and the practical implementation of it.

Labib and Muslim also propose several boons of Ramadanic fasting, but neither of them devote extensive energy to the topic, nor provide Koranic or *ḥadīthic* references to their discussions.[50] For them the rituals to be performed are of much greater importance, as are they for Ash-Shiddieqy. This latter scholar even suggests that,

> Scientists cannot find the essence or the boons of Ramadanic fasting, since there simply is no sound text on the matter. [And] we cannot rely on our minds, for questions of this nature are not covered by the abilities of human reason.[51]

Consequently, lists of Ramadanic boons "may be valid, and they may not," and we are wisest to leave the question of the real Ramadanic boon (I. *hikmah yang sebenarnya*) to Allah, the Creator.[52]

SETTING THE DATES OF 1 RAMADAN AND 1 *SYAWAL*

As we will see in chapter five, questions pertaining to the dating of the first and last days of Ramadan are capable of producing some tensions in the Javanese Muslim community. The Koran only says that Muslims should fast "during a certain number of days"[53] in the "month of Ramadan,"[54] whereas

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[48] Suyuti 1996: 108.
[49] Suyuti 1996: 109f. Cf. Ash-Shiddieqy 2000: 25.
[50] Labib n.d.: 9, Muslim 2001: 15.
[51] Ash-Shiddieqy 2000: 12. *Ahli-ahli ilmu tak dapat dan tak sanggup mencari hakikat dan hikmah berpuasa di bulan Rarmadan karena tidak diperoleh nash yang sahih dalam hal ini. Kepada akal tak dapat dimajukan pertanyaan, karena hal yang semacam itu tidak masuk ke dalam kesanggupan akal manusia.*
[52] Ash-Shiddieqy 2000: 13. Cf. Chalil 1970: 63.
[53] QS 2:184.

the *ḥadīth* literature concerning the commencement of Ramadan recommends physical sighting (A. *ruʾyah*) of the new crescent moon (A. *hilāl*), or, if overcast, the number of days of *Shaʿbān* to be 'completed' (A. *ikmāl*) to be thirty (or, in some cases twenty-nine). Another method tells about how the beginning of the new month is to be 'estimated' (A. *qadara*) by way of calculating (A. *ḥisāb*).[55] These slightly vague imperatives have consequently produced two major groupings in Java—and elsewhere—, whose line of division largely coincides with that between modernists and traditionalists. Without anticipating too much, we can say that the traditionalists and the Indonesian government are proponents of the physical sighting and completion method, whereas modernists are more inclined to use the allegedly more 'scientific' method of calculating, or estimating. This will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter; here we will only concern ourselves with what our Ramadanic manuals have to say about the fixing of the dates of 1 Ramadan and 1 *Syawal*.

Interestingly, of those works that mention questions pertaining to the fixing of the new moon, all are in favor of the physical sighting method (I. *rukyatul hilal*),[56] with the additional idea of completing (I. *menyempurnakan, menggenapkan*) thirty days of *Syaban* should the sky be overcast. Their attitudes to the problem differ in some important aspects, however. (Note that both Muslim and Labib do not discuss the issue at all.)

Suyuti only shortly mentions the problem, but makes the important observation that the fixing of these dates has large implications for the Islamic community, in that it involves the potentiality of Muslims performing something that is forbidden (I. *haram*) according to their own religion.[57] As we saw in chapter three above, Muslims are neither supposed to fast during the last two days of Syaban nor during the holidays (I. *idul fitri* and *idul adha*), whereas they are obliged (I. *diwajibkan*) to fast during Ramadan. This is a precarious situation in that it in those years where groups within the Islamic community hold different opinions concerning the commencement or termination of the month of fasting, the one group will unavoidably regard the other as committing a sin, and vice versa. This, in turn, is of course due to the fact that group A believes that group B is fasting during the last day of *Syaban*, whereas group B regards group A of ignoring a Muslim obligation. When it comes to the termination of the month long fast, the one group will regard the other as breaking the fast one day too early, whereas this group, in turn, will become confused by seeing their fellow Muslims continue to fast during what they perceive to be the feast of *Lebaran*. Naturally, situations

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[54] QS 2:185.

[55] See chapter three above.

[56] See Chalil (1970: 70), who supports the *hisab* method, for a different approach. He argues that *ru'jah* (old Indonesian spelling) in the traditions and *sjahida* (old spelling for *syahida*, A. *shahida*) in QS 2:185 which translates as 'see' (I. *melihat*) need not be interpreted as seeing with ones physical eyes, but perhaps with ones reason or intellect.

[57] Suyuti 1996: 10.

like these may disturb the unity of the Muslim community (I. *ukhuwah Islamiyah*). In his advocating of the *rukyatul hilal* method, Suyuti argues that the Indonesian government should take a proactive role and publicly pronounce the exact date of the commencement and termination of Ramadan. If it does so, the Indonesian people are obliged to follow its leader (I. *imam*), and this would, says Suyuti, be very supportive to the unity of the Indonesian Muslim community. But this is as far as he takes the matter of Muslim unity; any attempts of getting the entire world-wide Muslim community to commence and terminate Ramadan in uniformity would not only be impossible, but also deviate from the *sunnah* of the prophet.[58]

Ahmadi & Prasetya would also like to see the Indonesian government taking a more active role in this matter, since the Muslim community is obliged to follow its government's orders.[59] Unambiguous statements from the Department of Religious Affairs would then spare the Indonesian Muslim community much stress. And again, emphasis is laid on the fact that it is first and foremost the Indonesian Republic that is of interest; to adjust the Indonesian experience with that of Mecca, for example, would be of no use, and indeed constitute a deviation from the straight way.[60] Now, by fixing the appropriate dates, the authors argue that the government should use the method of *rukyatul hilal*, since it has apparent higher status than the *hisab* method. They state no less than nine reasons to why this method should be superior, the three most important of which are that (1) the Koran does not mention the use of *hisab*; (2) the prophet and his companions always used the *rukyatul hilal* method and completed thirty days of Syaban/Ramadan if in doubt; and (3) the founders of the four Islamic legal schools all agreed that the methodology of *hisab* cannot be used as a replacement of *rukyatul hilal*.[61]

The ideas and understandings of Ash-Shiddieqy are, as usual, a bit more complex. Apart from his discussion in *Pedoman Puasa*, he has also published several articles on the matter, some of which have been collected and republished in a small book entitled *Awal dan Akhir Ramadhan: Mengapa Harus Berbeda?* (I., The Beginning and End of Ramadan: Why Do We Have to Differ?).[62] Generally, Ash-Shiddieqy is a proponent of the *rukyatul hilal* method—notwithstanding his modernist orientation—, and consequently argues that the new moon has to be spotted. Should bad weather prevent this, then it is compulsory to 'complete' thirty days of *Syaban*.[63] To 'calculate' the beginning and end of Ramadan cannot, however, be justified, since it so clearly would be in opposition with several traditions of the prophet. The traditions that seem to legitimize the *hisab* methodology must be interpreted, says Ash-Shiddieqy, in the light of equating the phrase *fāqdirū*

[58] Suyuti 1996: 11.
[59] Ahmadi & Prasetya 2000: 31.
[60] Ahmadi & Prasetya 2000: 33.
[61] Ahmadi & Prasetya 2000: 34.
[62] Ash-Shiddieqy 2001.
[63] Ash-Shiddieqy 2000: 55-59.

lah (A., calculate it) with *fākmilū* (A., complete), since, he goes on, "*hadits* are to be interpreted by *hadits* themselves."[64] This way, the only legitimate way becomes *rukyatul hilal* with additional completing of Syaban should this be needed. Elsewhere, Ash-Shiddieqy is not so stiff, and insinuates that the important thing is that *one* of the systems is chosen and followed by the entire community. Here he, as the others, argues for a stronger and more active role of the government, which should take its responsibility and clearly declare the beginning and end of the month of fasting to its subjects, who then would be obliged to follow.[65] In Ash-Shiddieqy's arguing, this proposal is taken to its limit, and he argues that the entire worldwide Islamic community should perform the fast simultaneously (i.e., commencing and terminating the fast on the same day/date). This he refers to the following Koranic injunction: "Verily [O you who believe in Me] this community of yours is one single community [...]."[66] In more detail, he says that

> ...if the inhabitants of one country see the [new] moon, then it becomes obligatory to commence the fast in all other Islamic countries... [...] So, when someone among them [members of the Muslim community] sees the moon in some country, be that in the Hijaz, in Iran, in Palestine, in Malaysia, or in Indonesia, then the entire Islamic community becomes obliged to fast, [and] there is no difference between those who are close [to the area of spotting] and those who are far [from that same area], as long as they receive the news of the *rukyah* prior to dawn. Then they can state their intent and have the nocturnal meal.[67]

If this cannot be achieved, he argues elsewhere, then there should at least be unity within the nation of Indonesia. To accomplish this goal, Ash-Shiddieqy says that the Indonesian Muslim community should follow the decision taken in the capital (by the government, presumably), leaning on *rukyatul hilal* in Jakarta itself or on reports from other Indonesian areas whose authenticity can be trusted. There is thus no need for the Sumatran *rukyah* committee, for example, to keep searching for the new moon, should its appearance already have been reported by the committee's Balinese counterpart.[68] Elsewhere, again, Ash-Shiddieqy takes another approach to the problem and suggests that the entire Islamic *umat* should follow the results gathered in Mecca.[69]

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[64] Ash-Shiddieqy 2001: 2. Cf. Ash-Shiddieqy 2000: 60.
[65] Ash-Shiddieqy 2001: 3f, Ash-Shiddieqy 2000: 61.
[66] QS 21:92. Ash-Shiddieqy incorrectly states that this would be QS 21:129 (Ash-Shiddieqy 2000: 66), but such a place does not exist in the Koran, remembering that chapter 21 only holds 112 verses.
[67] Ash-Shiddieqy 2000: 65f. *...apabila penduduk sesuatu negeri melihat bulan, wajiblah puasa atas sekuruh negeri-negeri Islam yang lain...* [...] *Maka siapa saja di antara mereka melihat bulan di negeri mana saja, Hijaz, Iran, Palestina, Malaysia, atau Indonesia, wajiblah puasa atas semua ummat Islam, tidak ada perbedaan antara yang dekat dengan yang jauh, bila sampai kepada mereka berita rukyah di malam hari sebelum fajar. Dan mereka dapat berniat dan bersahur.*
[68] Ash-Shiddieqy 2001: 5, 37.
[69] Ash-Shiddieqy 2001: 28f., 37.

Before moving on to other topics, we should note Ash-Shiddieqy's discussions concerning the relationship between the two methods of *rukyatul hilal* and *hisab.* Although he is in general favor of the first of these, he also acknowledges the validity and use of the latter, and refers to the Koran in doing this.[70] Moreover, he argues that the two methods should complement each other, which the following quote illustrates:

> To determine the possibility of *rukyah* we use *hisab*. [And] to check the validity of the *hisab* we make use of *rukyat*. And we cannot solely hold on to the method of *hisab* without paying attention to that of *rukyah*.[71]

A similar attitude was interestingly put forward by an Indonesian astronomer during Ramadan 2002.[72]

THE LENGTH OF THE SUPEREROGATORY PRAYERS

The performance of various additional and supererogatory ritual prayers (I. *sholat*, A. *ṣalāh*) is probably the single most important ritual activity among Javanese Muslims during Ramadan. Mosques and smaller prayer houses (I. *musholla*, A. *muṣallan*) are crowded to an unprecedented degree during the nights of the holy month, when people—young and old, men and women—show up in throngs upon being summoned by the *muazzin* (I., A. *muʾadh-dhin*, muezzin) and/or the *bedug* (J., mosque drum). It is a time of great social interaction, where feelings of joy, victory, and *takwa* mix in what eventually becomes a physical as well as a spiritual exercise. However, the atmosphere is disturbed in some mosques where members of the congregation have different opinions concerning the number of *raka'at* (I., prayer cycles, A. *rakʿah*, pl. *rakaʿāt*) to be performed during these *tarawih* (I., A. *tarāwīḥ*) prayers. Again without anticipating too much, two groups may be discerned: those arguing for eight *raka'at*, and those arguing for twenty. Once more, these two groups correspond to those of the modernists and the traditionalists.[73]

Of our five Ramadanic handbooks, it is only Suyuti who has nothing to say about the *tarawih* prayers, whereas all the other devote substantial chapters to the issue.[74] Of these, all agree that it is *sunnah muakkad* (I., confirmed, certain, A. *muʾakkad*) to perform the *tarawih* prayers, that they may be per-

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[70] QS 6:96, QS 10:5, and QS 55:5.

[71] Ash-Shiddieqy 2000: 72, Ash-Shiddieqy 2001: 34. *Untuk menentukan kemungkinan ru'yah dipergunakan hisab. Untuk mengecek salah benarnya hisab, dibuktikan dengan ru'yah. Dan bukanlah semata-mata berpegang kepada hisab, tanpa menghiraukan ru'yah.*

[72] Raharto 2002. Cf. Setyanto 2002.

[73] Only questions of theoretical nature will be discussed in this chapter; for a practical understanding of the *tarawih* prayers, see the subsequent chapter.

[74] As noted above, Suyuti's *Nuansa Ramadhan: Puasa & Lebaran* does not to the same extent as the other books considered here have the character of ritual manual.

formed in congregation or alone, and that they should be performed after the completion of the night prayers (I. *sholat isya*) but before dawn (I. *fajar*).[75] Labib could be said to present a confusing picture of the 'correct' number of *raka'at* in the performance of the *tarawih* prayers. First he says that the prophet used to perform only eight *raka'at tarawih* and an additional three *raka'at witir* (another additional ritual prayer), whereas the caliph ᶜUmar bin Khaṭṭāb used to perform 20 *raka'at tarawih* and three *raka'at witir*. In support of the 'eight-way', he cites an oft-cited tradition in which one of Muhammad's wives, 'Aisyah (A. ᶜĀᵓishah), is reported as having said that the prophet never—during Ramadan or at other times—performed more than eleven *raka'at* (including three *raka'at witir*).[76] Based on this tradition, he says that—and herein lays the seed of confusion—, people perform *tarawih* with twenty-three *raka'at* as ᶜUmar did (!).[77] And then follows an extensive guiding through how exactly the prayers are to be performed, and here he grounds the whole explanation in the presupposition that *tarawih* prayers are to consist of twenty-three units.[78] But then he concludes that discussion by saying that

> There is one thing we need to know, and that is that to perform twenty units of *tarawih* prayers was the habit of the Companions, whereas to perform only eight units was the habit of our grand Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, whom we should imitate and follow in every matter, all the more so in ritual matters.[79]

And this is supported by a Koranic passage in which Muhammad is portrayed as an *uswah ḥasanah* (A., excellent example),[80] and a tradition in which the prophet is quoted as saying that Muslims should perform the *sholat* as they saw him perform it (A. *ṣallū kamā raytumūnī uṣallī*). From this, Labib then encourages his readers to choose "the more correct alternative."[81] He also directs a refined criticism to the practice of performing twenty-three units, by saying that the performance of the *tarawih* prayers will be in vain (I. *sia-sia belaka*) if they are rushed through.[82] It is common knowledge in Java that mosques performing only eight *raka'at* usually finish around the same time as those who perform twenty (see further next chapter).

In the work of Ahmadi & Prasetya we find another—partly confusing too—attitude to the problem. After discussing the various approaches to the

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[75] Labib n.d.: 12, Ahmadi & Prasetya 2000: 87f, Muslim 2001: 17, Ash-Shiddieqy 2000: 189f.
[76] Labib n.d.: 12.
[77] Labib n.d.: 13.
[78] Labib n.d.: 13-21.
[79] Labib n.d.: 21. *Dan satu hal yang perlu diketahui bahwa shalat Tarowih yang ke 20 raka'at itu adalah amalan sahabat, sedangkan yang 8 raka'at adalah amalan Nabi besar kita Muhammad s.a.w. yang patut kita contoh dan kita teladani dalam hal apapun, terutama dalam hal ibadah beliau.*
[80] QS 33:21.
[81] Labib n.d.: 22.
[82] Labib n.d.: 21.

issue, these authors simply conclude that the question of the number of *raka'at* to be performed in *tarawih* prayers has to be a decision that is left to the convictions of the individual Muslims. They also state that both opinions have legal backing (I. *sandaran hukum*), and that the issue consequently should not be blown up to a conflict between different groups.[83] Having said this, however, they go on to state that

> To perform twenty *raka'at* in *tarawih* prayer was the custom of the companions of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, and thus constitutes a consensus among them. Consequently, that decision has a stronger legal basis [than performing only eight *raka'at*], with the result that a substantial part of the successors and lawyers followed this ruling.[84]

But then again, to make controversies over the number of units of *tarawih* to be performed will only harm the unity of the Muslim community.[85] As we saw Labib did above, Ahmadi & Prasetya then also conclude their discussion by saying that those who chose to follow the way of the companions should do this in full devotion (I. *khusyuk,* A. *khushū^{c}*), and not only hurriedly run through the twenty *raka'at*.[86]

In his *Penuntun Ibadah Puasa*, Muslim too presents a liberal view concerning the number of units to be performed. After having shown that there are three opinions to be found on the issue (eight, twenty, and thirty-six *raka'at* as performed by (parts of) the Mālikī school), he states that the number of *raka'at* to be performed has to be chosen based on

> the abilities and convictions of the individual Muslims themselves. Religion [i.e., Islam] does not unambiguously decide on the number of *raka'at* to be performed by the Islamic community. [...] Thus, people (communities) should not be arrogant and blame other people (communities). The performance of *tarawih* prayers, be that eight, twenty, or thirty-six *raka'at*, has to be based on faith and the hope of attracting Allah's blessings and rewards. What use is there to perform loads of *raka'at* should it be done only due to feelings of shame [towards other Muslims] or to [human] pressure?[87]

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[83] Ahmadi & Prasetya 2000: 91, 98. "Not even the Prophet forcefully implemented his convictions," they say.

[84] Ahmadi & Prasetya 2000: 98. *Tarawih 20 rakaat diamalkan oleh para sahabat Nabi Muhammad saw, jadi merupakan ijmak para sahabat. Berarti ketentuan tersebut mempunyai sandaran hukum yang lebih kuat sehingga sebagian besar para tabiin dan fiqaha melakukannya.*

[85] Cf. Rahim 1990: 87ff.

[86] Ahmadi & Prasetya 2000: 98.

[87] Muslim 2001: 21. *...kesanggupan dan keyakinan masing-masing orang. Agama tidak menentukan secara pasti tentang bilangan roka'at yang harus dikerjakan oleh umat Islam.* [...] *Dengan demikian sebagian orang (umat) jangan sampai merasa paling benar atau menyalahkan orang (umat) lainnya. Sholat tarawih, baik yang dikerjakan 8 roka'at, 20 roka'at atau 36 roka'at harus didasarkan kepada iman serta mengharap ridlo dan pahala dari Allah. Apalah artinya sholat tarawih dengan bilangan roka'at yang banyak, tapi dikerjakan karena malu kepada orang (manusia) dan terpaksa.*

Ash-Shiddieqy has a similar approach. Ramadan, according to him, contains two *jihad*: to fast, and to perform nightly prayers.[88] As for the number of raka'at, Ash-Shiddieqy repeatedly states that the prophet performed only eight units,[89] which he bases on the following prophetic tradition narrated by ᶜĀʾishah (which I have referred to above too):

> He did not pray more than eleven rakat in Ramadan or in any other month. He used to pray four rakat—let alone their beauty and length—and then he would pray four—let alone their beauty and length—and then he would pray three rakat (witr).[90]

There are, however, some *aḥādīth* in which the prophet is reported to have performed twenty *raka'at*, but these Ash-Shiddieqy categorize as *hadits dla'if* (A. *ḍaᶜīf*, weak) or *hadits munkar* (A., unacknowledged, disagreeable).[91] Muhammad performed eight *raka'at*, Ash-Shiddieqy says, whereas any act of exceeding this number he portrays as an obvious innovation (I. *bid'ah yang nyata*).[92] Nevertheless, it is not prohibited to perform twenty—or more, or less—units of *tarawih* prayers: we should perform them in accordance with our abilities (I. *seberapa yang disanggupi*).[93] Ash-Shiddieqy's conclusion to the problem is then that the *sunnah* of the prophet is eight units, whereas the additional twelve *raka'at* are *mustahab* (I., appreciable, A. *mustaḥabb*).[94]

Now, before leaving the issue of the *tarawih* prayers, we should return to Muslim and have a look at the boons of the prayers, which he describes in detail. The general idea of the supererogatory prayers is that they will be rewarded with divine forgiveness for previous sins, according to *ḥadīth* material.[95] But Muslim presents us with a more comprehensive picture of the case, and suggests one extraordinariness for each of the thirty nights of Ramadan in which the *tarawih* prayers are performed.[96] To reiterate them all here would be too lengthy an endeavor, but I will cite a few in order to make the reader more capable of understanding the nightly rushes to the mosques during the month of fasting. Muslim has the following to say about Muslims performing the *tarawih* prayer during the first, eighth, ninth, thirteenth, sixteenth, and twenty-first of Ramadan (to mention just a few):

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[88] Ash-Shiddieqy 2000: 191.
[89] Ash-Shiddieqy 2000: 189, 193, 194, 195, 199.
[90] E.g. ḤB 3,32,230.
[91] Ash-Shiddieqy 2000: 194.
[92] Ash-Shiddieqy 2000: 195. The word *bid'ah* may have positive connotations in some contexts (*bid'ah hasanah*), but here it is presented as something unwanted.
[93] Ash-Shiddieqy 2000: 196.
[94] Ash-Shiddieqy 2000: 199.
[95] See for example ḤB 3,32,226 and ḤM 4,1664.
[96] Muslim gives no references in this connection. (Appropriate traditions are to be found in both Bukhārī and Muslim, however.)

> The believing Muslim will be freed from his sins on the first night (of *tarawih* prayers) and return to a state similar to that of when he was born by his mother.[97]
>
> On the eighth night, Allah the Exalted will give to him whatever He gave to Abraham, peace upon him.[98]
>
> On the ninth night, it is as if he performs his rituals towards Allah just as the Prophet, peace be upon him, did.[99]
>
> On the thirteenth night, [he will provided for so that when] he comes to the day of resurrection, [he will come] in a state of safety from evil.[100]
>
> On the sixteenth night, Allah will make notes to free him from hell and provide him with free entrance to heaven.[101]
>
> On the twenty-first night, Allah will build for him a castle of light in heaven.[102]

With divine promises like these, one can better grasp the engagement Javanese Muslims show the performance of *tarawih* prayers. After all, who would not like a divinely built castle of light in heaven?

IN SEARCH OF *LAILATUL QADAR*

As mentioned above, *lailatul qadar* (I., the Night of Power, A. *laylatu l-qadr*) is thought to be "better than a thousand months."[103] The Koran was first sent down during this night—the exact date is uncertain—, during which performance of additional prayers and uttering of supplications will be rewarded with divine forgiveness for previous sins. This is also the night when human destinies for the coming year are thought to be determined.[104] Taken together, this is a prosperous and important night for fasting Muslims, and it is thus of

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[97] Muslim 2001: 63f. *Orang mu'min terlepas dari dosanya pada malam pertama (tarawih) seperti hari dia dilahirkan oleh ibunya.*
[98] Muslim 2001: 66. *Pada malam kedelapan, Allah Ta'ala memberikan kepadanya seperti apa-apa yang telah Dia berikan kepada Nabi Ibrahim a.s.*
[99] Muslim 2001: 67. *Pada malam kesembilan, seakan-akan ia beribadah kepada Allah Ta'ala seperti ibadah Nabi s.a.w.*
[100] Muslim 2001: 68. *Pada malam ketiga belas, ia akan datang pada hari kiamat dalam keadaan aman dari keburukan (hari kiamat).*
[101] Muslim 2001: 69. *Pada malam keenam belas, Allah mencatat baginya bebas selamat dari neraka dan bebas masuk surga.*
[102] Muslim 2001: 71. *Pada malam kedua pulu satu, Allah akan membangun untuknya sebuah istana di surga dari cahaya.*
[103] QS 97:3.
[104] The Koran (44:4) says about the "blessed night" (A. *laylat al-mubārakah*) mentioned in QS 44:3 that in it "was made clear, in wisdom, the distinction between all things [good and evil]," and this constitutes the basis for the present idea.

interest for us to consult our Indonesian Ramadanic handbooks on the matter.[105]

In doing this, we find that they all have a rather similar approach to the matter: they cite the same Koranic verses and traditions, they refrain from saying anything final on the exact date of the occasion, and they all extol the grandeur of this auspicious night. As for the date of *lailatul qadar* we find no efforts in the handbooks to settle for just one night, but rather do all of them discuss the fact that there exists different opinions on the matter. But according to the Indonesian manuals, it is not the question of *when* this night occurs—or what it *is* for that matter—that should be of interest, but rather what we *do* when it occurs.[106] Indeed, there is a boon (I. *hikmah*) in that we do not know the exact date, since that, so to speak, forces us to perform good deeds and devote ourselves to supererogatory rituals during a longer period of time.[107] Naturally, nothing bad can come from this.

In the manuals we also find wide support for the idea that the purpose to hunt (I. *memburu*) or search for (I. *mencari*) this night is that it calls for divine forgiveness, and that good deeds are to be rewarded similar to good deeds performed during a thousand months.[108] This is also a night in which the angels come down to the face of the earth and spread benevolence in the form of happiness, blessings, knowledge, and fortune. Moreover, Ash-Shiddieqy has it that during this night all the gates of heaven are wide open,[109] whereas Suyuti in a more mystical tone says that people who gets (I. *mendapat*) *lailatul qadar* will always receive divine guidance to the straight way (I. *jalan lurus*), and even perhaps be able to make contact (I. *melakukan kontak*) with His angels.[110]

There is some discussion on the signs (I. *tanda*) of *lailatul qadar* in the literature. According to Ash-Shiddieqy there are four signs for those who 'gets' this night: they will (1) see that everything in this world and in the heavens will prostrate itself towards God; (2) see everything clearly although being in a dark place; (3) hear the greetings of the angels; and (4) have their supplications granted. However, this only rarely happens, and it is possible to 'get' *lailatul qadar* without obtaining these signs. More general and readily available signs include meteorological phenomena: a clear, white sun rising over the horizon while shining tenderly is said to be such a sign, as is a clear

[105] It is only Labib who has nothing to say about *lailatul qadar*.
[106] E.g., Ahmadi & Prasetya 2000: 102, Suyuti 1996: 20.
[107] Ash-Shiddieqy 2000: 255, 263, Ahmadi & Prasetya 2000: 103. It is noteworthy perhaps that some of those arguing for the 27th to be the correct date of *lailatul qadar* may ground their arguments in the fact that the Arabic for *lailatul qadar* has nine letters (*l-y-l-h-a-l-q-d-r*), and that the term *lailatul qadar* shows up three times in QS 97. Nine times three equals twenty-seven (!). Moreover, the Arabic letter *h*, which in QS 97:5 represents *lailatul qadar* has the numerical value of 27. Cf. Ahmadi & Prasetya 2000: 112, Ash-Shiddieqy 2000: 257.
[108] E.g., Ahmadi & Prasetya 2000: 103, Ash-Shiddieqy 2000: 264f, Suyuti 1996: 20.
[109] Ash-Shiddieqy 2000: 250.
[110] Suyuti 1996: 21.

sky accompanied by a gentle temperature.[111] (In a tropical country like Indonesia, this virtually never occurs, it could be added.)

Finally, mention should also be made of that special supplication the prophet provided one of his wives with if/when she 'received' or 'got' this night. All of our five manuals mention it—this is as close to *lailatul qadar* as Labib comes—, and it is thus fair to quote it here in its simplicity: "O God, truly You are the Forgiver, You like forgiving, so please forgive me."[112] In essence, this supplication emphasizes the aim of searching for this night, i.e. to get divine forgiveness.

IKTIKAF

The general meaning of *iktikaf* (I., A. *iᶜtikāf*) is to "abide in meditation in houses of worship."[113] Theoretically, this can be done during any time of the year, but is especially encouraged during the last ten days of Ramadan when it can serve as a vehicle in the *lailatul qadar* search. Except for Ash-Shiddieqy, the authors of our Ramadanic handbooks do not devote much space or energy to the topic of *iktikaf*, although they are in agreement that it in the eyes of Allah is a highly esteemed form of worship. We are told about the pillars (I. *rukun*) of *iktikaf*, about its prerequisites (I. *syarat*), and about what invalidates (I. *membatalkan*) it. These entities differ slightly between the various manuals, but the general picture is that the pillars of *iktikaf* include stating one's intention (I. *niat*) and being in a mosque (used for the Friday service), whereas the prerequisites demand that the *mu'takif* (I., person performing *iktikaf*) is a sane Muslim free from menstruation. *Iktikaf* is invalidated by leaving the mosque without sound reasons, having sexual intercourse, secreting sperm, leaving Islam, or beginning to menstruate.[114] As for the goals and aims of *iktikaf*, one is of course to intensify one's search for *lailatul qadar*. The intent to be stated, however, is only comprised of the words "I intend to *iktikaf* in this mosque because of Allah, the Exalted."[115] Elaborating on this, both Ash-Shiddieqy and Ahmadi & Prasetya says that the double aim and intent of *iktikaf* should be to draw closer to God (I. *mendekatkan diri kepada Allah*) and simultaneously avoid acts of immorality (I. *menjauhkan maksiat*).[116] In greater detail we read that,

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[111] Ash-Shiddieqy 2000: 273. Cf. Ahmadi & Prasetya 2000: 111f. who actually refers to Ash-Shiddieqy in this matter.
[112] A. *allāhumma innaka ᶜafuwun tuḥibbu l-ᶜafwa fāᶜfu ᶜannī*, I. *Wahai Tuhanku, sesungguhnya Engkau adalah Tuhan Yang Maha Pemaaf, Engkau menyukai kemaafan, maka maafkanlah daku*.
[113] QS 2:187.
[114] Compare Muslim 2001: 76f, Ahmadi & Prasetya 2000: 108f, and Ash-Shiddieqy 2000: 283ff.
[115] Muslim 2001: 77. A. *nawaytu an aᶜtakifa fī hāda l-masjid lilāhi taᶜālā.*
[116] Ash-Shiddieqy 2000: 274, Ahmadi & Prasetya 2000: 107.

> the boons behind *iktikaf* include to train the soul to be in a state of tranquility, far from the gnawing of the ever-tempting desires that haunt humans, and to refrain from the worldly uproars.[117]

THE FEAST OF *LEBARAN*

After twenty-nine or thirty days of Ramadanic fasting, the presence of the new moon of *Syawal* (A. *Shawwal*) signals the end of the obligatory fast, and the commencement of the feast of *Idul Fitri* (I., A. *ʿīdu l-fiṭr*) or *Lebaran* (I.). As the new day in both the Javanese and the Islamic tradition begins with sunset, this feast actually begins already after the *maghrib* (I.) prayers on the last of Ramadan, and is publicly announced through every mosque and prayer house by means of reciting the *takbiran* (I.). This is a set formula (as already mentioned earlier in this work), whose reciting is legitimized by QS 2:185 in which Muslims are encouraged to "extol God." Indeed, the extolling of God is what this night should be all about: in a *hadits* quoted by Ahmadi & Prasetya we are told that whoever vivifies (I. *menghidupkan*) this night (by engaging in ritual activities) will have his heart vivified when the hearts of his fellows become weak.[118] In one of our other Ramadanic handbooks we are told more precisely that this night should be filled with "*dzikir*, *takbir*, supplications, the asking of God's forgiveness" and the giving of alms.[119]

Most energy in the ritual manuals considered here is, however, laid on the performance of the special holiday prayers (I. *sholat id*, A. *ṣalātu l-ʿīd*), the performance of which is *sunnah muakkad* (I., confirmed, certain).[120] These prayers should be carried out in congregation[121] during the morning of 1 *Syawal*, and as many Muslims as possible—men and (even menstruating) women, young and old, slaves and freemen—should be present at the occasion. Following the tradition of the prophet, it is valid to perform them both in mosques and in large outdoor arenas, though there is a general inclination to prefer the latter. Indeed, few mosques would be able to accommodate the crowds of Muslims that show up at this occasion; even large outdoor sport arenas have trouble with that in Java.

Before leaving home on this morning, one should have taken a bath, have dressed up in one's best clothes and be using musk, and one should also have had something small to eat—all in line with the custom of Muham-

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[117] Ahmadi & Prasetya 2000: 109. *Hikmah yang terkandung di dalam iktikaf di antaranya ialah melatih jiwa untuk selalu bersikap tenang, jauh dari rongrongan nafsu yang senantiasa menggoda setiap insan, dan menjauhkan diri dari kebisingan duniawi.*

[118] Ahmadi & Prasetya 2000: 124, 128.

[119] Ash-Shiddieqy 2000: 331. Abdurrahman (1992: 55) notes, however, that the practice of *takbiran* was neither ordered nor exemplified by the prophet.

[120] Labib n.d.: 26ff, Muslim 2001: 96ff, Ahmadi & Prasetya 2000: 129ff, Ash-Shiddieqy 2000: 333ff.

[121] Ash-Shiddieqy says that the Shāfiʿī school permits the performance of the *'id* prayers at home (2000: 333), but I have never heard of anyone doing this in Indonesia.

mad.[122] Then, walking (it was the tradition of the prophet to walk) to the place of prayer, one should pronounce the *takbiran* and be sure that one takes another way home later, just in order to meet as many different fellow Muslims as possible on this day. The performance of the prayer itself is not preceded by the usual call to prayer; instead, the *imam* will stand up and pronounce the *takbiratul ihram* (I., A. *takbīratu l-iḥrām*)—that is, the *Allahu akbar* which initiates any performance of ritual prayer—following the pronouncement of *aṣ-ṣalātu l-jāmᶜiah* (A., let us pray in congregation) by the muezzin. The *sholat 'id* very much looks like any additional (non-obligatory) *sholat* consisting of two *raka'at*.[123] However, there is an important difference in that the *imam* reads *Allahu akbar* seven times preceding the *surat al-fatihah* (I., A. *sūratu l-fātiḥah*, the first chapter of the Koran) in the first *raka'at*, and five times in the second. The congregation is supposed to pronounce this silently too, and let each of them be followed by the saying of "Glory be to God, and All Praise is due to God, and There is no god but God, and God is greater" in Arabic.[124] It is *sunnah* for the *imam*, on the other hand, to recite *sūratu l-ᶜalā* during the first *raka'at* and *sūratu l-ghāshiyah* during the second.[125]

The performance of these prayers, which in the words of Suyuti constitutes the witness of the return to purity (I. *saksi kemablinya fitrah*),[126] should then be followed by a sermon in which the *khatib* (I., A. *khaṭīb*, 'preacher') is supposed to repeatedly state the *takbiran*. (During a regular Friday prayer, the sermon precedes the performance of the *sholat*.) Both Ahmadi & Prasetya and Muslim include examples of such *id* sermons in their books.[127] After listening to this sermon, it was the tradition of the prophet and his companions to state the greeting (I. *tahniah,* A. *taḥīyah*) of *taqabbala llāhu minnā wa minkum* (A., may God accept our good deeds, and yours too).[128] The pronouncement of this greeting should thus replace the more common Indonesian *minal 'aidin wal faizin* (I., A. *mina l-ᶜāᵓidīn wa l-fāᵓizīn*) whose origin is uncertain.[129]

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[122] Apart from these standard imperatives, Labib (n.d.:28f) also says that it is preferable to cut one's nails, beard and moustache before leaving home.

[123] See also the *sholat* manuals of, for example, Rifa'i (1976?) and Al Sawwaf (1999).

[124] A. *subḥāna llāh, wa l-ḥamdu lillāh, wa lā ilāha illā llāh, wa llāhu akbar.* This is a standard litany used in various *zikir* activities.

[125] QS 87 and QS 88 respectively. See Ash-Shiddieqy 2000: 333. Apart from these, Muslim (2001: 98) also mentions *sūrat qāf* (QS 50) and *sūratu l-qamar* (QS 54).

[126] Suyuti 1996: 134.

[127] Ahmadi & Prasetya 2000: 161ff, Suyuti 1996: 151ff.

[128] Ahmadi &Prasetya 2000: 134f. Ash-Shiddieqy 2000: 335. Suyuti 1996: 131.

[129] Ash-Shiddieqy 2000: 335, Ahmadi &Prasetya 2000: 135. The Indonesian *minal 'aidin wal faizin* is short for the Arabic *jaᶜalanāᵓllāhu wa iyyākum min al-ᶜāᵓidīn wa ᵓl-fāᵓizīn*, which Suyuti (1996: 135) translates as "May God include us all among those who return pure, and succeeds in defeating the lustful desires" (I. *Semoga Allah menjadikan kita semua termasuk orang-orang yang kembali suci dan menang melawan hawa nafsu*). See also next chapter.

Not much more is said about the feast of *Idul Fitri* in our Ramadanic handbooks, the exception being the work of Suyuti. Here we find a more general and philosophical treatment of *Lebaran*, including discussions on topics such as *Lebaran* as a symbol of victory,[130] *Lebaran* as a means for strengthening the unity of the Muslim community,[131] and *Lebaran* as a time for returning to a state of purity (from sins).[132] Suyuti also includes a critique of some practices adhered to by the Indonesian people in his work, and speaks of the devastating effects these may have on the sacredness (I. *kesakralan*) of this feast.[133] Primarily, he turns his critique towards the 'belief' that *Idul Fitri* only is about wearing new clothes, buying loads of useless stuff, and going to entertainment parks where one's desires are put under temptation. This he refers to as cultural pollution (I. *polusi budaya*), which, in his own words, has

> ...poisoned the heart of the young generation, for whom the feast of *Idul Fitri* must be accompanied by large celebrations, journeys, rowdyish festivities with colorful clothes and garish decorations—all to satisfy the lustful desires and the illusions of pride.[134]

He also observes that *Lebaran* has become a feast for letting loose one's material desires (I. *nafsu kebendaan*), and comes to the conclusion that we, in line with the essence of *Lebaran*, should prioritize a celebration characterized by modesty and simplicity. Indeed, says Suyuti, the prophet recommended his fellows to wear their finest clothes on this occasion, but this statement has—fueled by the materialism and hedonism of the modern age—been brought so far away from its limits of decency that it has drawn close to insulting (I. *melecehkan*) Islam itself. It is consequently time to ask: How far have we grasped the essence of *Idul Fitri*?[135] And that rhetorical question concludes the discussion.

MISCELLANEOUS RAMADAN

Several other topics apart from those discussed so far are mentioned in our Ramadanic handbooks. Included among them are discussions of the prerequisites and pillars of fasting, together with explanations of what invalidates the fast and what does not. To reiterate those discussions here would pretty much

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[130] Suyuti 1996: 125.
[131] Suyuti 1996: 132f, 145ff.
[132] Suyuti 1996: 137ff.
[133] Suyuti 1996: 125.
[134] Suyuti 1996: 127. *...meracuni kalbu generasi muda-mudi, di mana perayaan Idul Fitri seakan-akan harus senantiasa disambut dengan pesta pora, pesiar dan hura-hura dengan warna-warni pakaian dan perhiasan yang norak, guna memuaskan hawa nafsu dan kebanggan semu.*
[135] Suyuti 1996: 130.

be to reiterate what was said above in chapter three. Put differently, the Indonesian handbooks in these cases stick close to what has been called normative Islam (in its Shāfiᶜī dress) above. We also find in our ritual manuals discussions on *zakat fitrah* (I., A. *zakātu l-fiṭrah*, a special Ramadanic tithe), the payment of which is portrayed as a means for purifying one's soul (I. *mensucikan jiwa*).[136] There are also a host of other boons of paying this tithe before the performance of the special *id* prayer,[137] but these will be left outside the present discussion. For our purpose it is enough to note that the Ramadanic manuals stress the importance of paying the *zakat fitrah*, which only is natural considering that this practice has the status of obligatory (I. *wajib*) ritual activity within the Islamic tradition.

One topic that is mentioned in all the guidebooks, and hence calls for some attention here, is that of (special Ramadanic) supplications. Ramadan is invariably portrayed as a month in which prayers are answered, and there is, indeed, a prophetic tradition that has it that whoever fasts will not have her prayers left unanswered.[138] Two broad categories of supplications can be discerned in the Islamic tradition, i.e. the improvised and the standardized. The first of these are often composed—in vernaculars—at the moment they are uttered, although time and returning wishes may have standardizing effects upon them. The point is that they are personal and free in both content and form; nevertheless, there are 'rules of etiquette' to be followed for all kinds of supplications. It is some examples from the second category of Islamic supplications that will be presented here. These are fixed formulae to be recited in Arabic, and often follow the example of the prophet Muhammad. Below, I provide a few such supplications in English translation.[139] The first is to be stated at the moment of sighting the new moon:

> Month of benevolence, month of guiding [repeated three times]. I believe in Allah, who has created you.[140]

When breaking the fast every night, Muslims are supposed to utter:

> O, God, because of You I fast, and with Your blessings may I break the fast.[141]

Would one break the fast together with friends, then one should read:

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[136] Muslim 2001: 86. Cf. Ahmadi & Prasetya 2000: 113, Ash-Shiddieqy 2000: 325.
[137] See Muslim 2001: 95ff, Ahmadi & Prasetya 2000: 120ff, Ash-Shiddieqy 2000: 326.
[138] Suyuti 1996: 42. (*Ḥadīth* from Turmudzi and Ibnu Majah.) QS 2:186 is also frequently quoted in this connection.
[139] I have confined myself to mention but a few supplications here, all of which are very short. I have here translated the Indonesian, whereas the Arabic is given in notes.
[140] Labib n.d.: 29. I. *Bulan kebajikan, dan bulan petunjuk* [three times]. *Aku beriman kepada Allah, Dzat yang telah menjadikan kamu.* A. *al-hilālu khayrin wa rashid* [three times]. *āmantu billāhi lladhī khalaqaka.*
[141] Syihab 1995: 53. I. *Ya Allah, kepada Engkau aku puasa, dengan rezeki Engkau aku berbuka.* A. *allāhumma laka ṣumtu wa ᶜalā rizqika afṭartu.* (There is also a longer version of this supplication.)

> O, God, because of You we fast, and with your blessing may we break the fast. So accept our fasting. Indeed, You are the Most Hearing, the Most Knowledgeable.[142]

Mention is also made in the Ramadan handbooks of supplications to be said after the performance of the *tarawih* prayer, and after completing the recital of the Koran, for example, but they are too lengthy to be included here. Interested readers are referred to the work of Ahmad Sunarto, in which no less than 221 "selected supplications" are listed in both Indonesian and Arabic.[143]

RAMADANIC ARTICLES

Let us now turn to another type of media that also may function as 'cultural brokers' in Indonesia, namely the daily newspapers. Indonesian scholars are rather eager to have their ideas published in various national newspapers, and Indonesian readers are spoiled by at least two *opini* (I., opinion) articles in each daily every day. Topics touched upon in these *opini* articles vary greatly, although they most often touch upon current affairs from different angles.[144] During Ramadan, not surprisingly, newspapers are overwhelmed by Ramadanic articles, and it is with some of these we will be occupied below.

Before presenting the material, I should perhaps say something on the habits of the Javanese when it comes to newspapers. Both local and national newspapers are widely available throughout towns and cities in Java (many of them are available on the Internet too), and a substantial part of the urban Javanese reads at least one newspaper per day. The recipients of the Indonesian newspapers range from highly educated business men to pedicab drivers, and thus have a wide area of influence. Newspaper reading people can be spotted in every possible situation and location in Java, whose population, by the way, has a high rate of literacy. I have no figures on sold newspapers per day in Indonesia, but such figures would necessarily not tell us much about exactly how many people read a newspaper per day anyway, since newspapers generally are passed on to family, friends, and colleagues once they have been read. In short, dailies are rather widely read in urban Java.

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[142] Sunarto 1982: 53. I. *Ya Allah karena Engkau kita berpuasa dan dengan rizqi-Mu kita berbuka. Dari itu terimalah puasa kita. Sesungguhnya Engkau adalah Maha mendengar lagi Megetahui.* A. *allāhumma laka ṣumnā wa ᶜalā rizqika afṭarnā fataqabbal minnā innaka anta as-samīᶜu l-ᶜalīm.*

[143] Sunarto 1982.

[144] When I write this (May 2003), for example, the problems in Aceh, North Sumatra, are frequently discussed in *opini* articles, and the matter is elaborated upon through economical, military, religious, social, and political glasses.

So we will concern ourselves here with newspaper articles on Ramadanic topics. The material stems from several different newspapers, although the most commonly referred to below are the national dailies of *Kompas*, *Media Indonesia*, and *Republika.* Some of the material has been republished in the form of anthologies, and I will make usage of five such collections of articles here.[145] The first of these is entitled *Puasa dan Kejujuran* (I., "Fasting and Honesty"), and was printed by the *Kompas* publishing house.[146] It is made up of articles once published in the daily *Kompas*. The second anthology is entitled *Mutiara Ramadan* (I., "Pearls of Ramadan"), and is a compilation of the modernist Amien Rais' articles on the topic, which all have been published in the Yogyakarta based daily *Kedaulatan Rakyat*.[147] The third book is given the title *Ramadhan, Bulan Seribu Bulan* (I., "Ramadan, the Month of a Thousand Months") and is a compilation of articles originally published in the ICMI newspaper *Republika*.[148] *Puasa, Titian Menuju Rayyan* (I., "Fasting, A Path Towards *Rayyan*") is the name of the fourth anthology, which presents articles once published in the *Jawa Pos*.[149] The last anthology is entitled *Meramadhankan Semua Bulan: Puasa Sebagai Tangga Ruhani* (I., "Ramadanize All Months: Fasting as a Spiritual Ladder"), and contains a compilation of Sufi oriented Ramadan articles.[150] Common to all the material is that it was 'readily available' when collected, in the sense that it could be found in ordinary newspapers or bookstores; we are thus neither here concerned with more 'specialized' material.

Reading through this material, one is immediately struck by the fact that the articles are not presenting any kind of ritual guidance, as we saw the monographs did above. Rather, the readers are here introduced to a more theoretical discussion of Ramadan. From these discussions, some recurring themes have been singled out for further elaboration below, and it is my hope that this will highlight some of the concerns Javanese Muslims have in connection with Ramadan. (Note that certain topics that already have been discussed above, such as the extraordinariness and excellence of Ramadan together with questions pertaining to *lailatul qadar* and *iktikaf*, will not be rediscussed here.)

My two main problems in writing this section have been to choose relevant and interesting articles, and arrange them in a readable manner. I decided finally to single out a few intermittent topics for separate discussion.

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[145] References are given to the anthologies, and not to the original source of publication. Such information may be obtained in the collections themselves, for those interested.
[146] Achmad & Ridhwan 2000.
[147] Adhy 2001.
[148] Saifuddin 2000.
[149] Sufyanto & Rofiqoh 2000. Recall that *Rayyan* (I., A. *ar-Rayyān*) is the name of a special gate in Paradise reserved for those carrying out the Ramadanic fast.
[150] RB Anwar 2002.

This is of course a reduction of the material—not all possible topics are discussed, and those that are discussed are not done so exhaustively—, but at least it is a conscious one. Ramadanic newspaper articles make up such a vast material that it could be the subject of a study in its own right; there has been no attempt from my side to make a comprehensive study of the material here. Finally, references have been kept to a minimum, in the sense that not all articles dealing with a certain theme have been listed in the notes.

IN SEARCH OF A KORANIC CONTEXT

As we have seen elsewhere in this study, the Koranic verses concerning the obligatory fast are not numerous.[151] There is, however, among Javanese Muslim scholars an apparent urge to connect the practice of fasting to various other verses from the Holy Book, in order to situate the Ramadanic fast in a wider Koranic context. (This is in no way a Javanese peculiarity, but rather a general Muslim activity.) Some of the attempts of contextualizing the fast Koranically will be highlighted below.

To begin, there are two similar Koranic verses that often are quoted in Ramadan articles in Indonesia:

> And [tell them that] I have not created the invisible beings and men to any end other than that they may [know and] worship Me.[152]

> And withal, they were not enjoined aught but that they should worship God, sincere in their faith in Him alone, turning away from all that is false; and that they should be constant in prayer; and that they should spend in charity: for this is a moral law endowed with ever-true soundness and clarity.[153]

The idea here is evidently to 'legitimize' fasting by drawing attention to the very purpose of human existence, i.e. to serve God. Islam teaches, so to speak, that the "function and duty of every human being is to serve the Creator."[154] This serving (I. *beribadah*) of God, moreover, takes two shapes: serving God in the sense of guarding over one's relation with Him (A. *ḥablu mina llāh*), and in the sense of guarding over one's relations with one's fellow humans (A. *ḥablu mina n-nās*). In this way, the Indonesian politician Mardjono says, even to engage in party politics can be regarded as part of the required serving of God. This makes sense if one remembers that the duty of politicians is to provide for and protect their subjects, or, in other words, to guard over one's relations with fellow humans. The fast of Ramadan, he

[151] QS 2:183-187.
[152] QS 51:56.
[153] QS 98:5.
[154] Mardjono 2000: 39. *...fungsi dan tugas hidup setiap diri manusia adalah untuk beribadah kepada Sang Pencipta...*

continues, has to profoundly affect the lives and works of Indonesian politicians, who, moreover, should not regard the holy month as a mere (moral) cease fire. Ramadan is a month for training and preparing oneself for the eleven post-Ramadanic months.[155] Men were not created just to serve Allah in the month of Ramadan, but rather throughout the year.

In another article, Luthfi Rachman argues that, and this is in line with *sūratu l-bayyinah* (QS 98), men indeed should serve God, but that this serving has to be securely based in feelings of sincerity (I. *keikhlasan*).[156] Just to perform acts of devotion (I. *ibadah*, A. *ʿibādah*, pl. *ʿibādāt*) will be of little use are they not carried out due to honest sincerity. Fasting throughout Ramadan is the foremost *ibadah* to determine if a Muslim is sincere or not in her performance of the religious duties, and this is due to the fact that fasting is a secret (I. *rahasia,* A. *sirrīyah*) ritual, in that nobody but the person herself (and God) can really tell if she is fasting or not.[157] Indeed, no one can tell if a person deliberately swallows some water while brushing her teeth, or even has a cigarette in some odd place.

As we have seen, the Koranic purpose of fasting in Ramadan is to produce Muslims who "remain conscious of God" (A. *taqwā*, I. *takwa*), a concept that will be further elaborated upon below. Connected to this is a verse from *al-baqarah* (QS 2) that has it that,

> ...whatever good you may do, God is aware of it. And make provisions for yourselves – but, verily, the best of all provisions is God-consciousness (A. *al-taqwā*): remain, then, conscious of Me, O you who are endowed with insight![158]

It is consequently argued that Muslims need to provide for themselves (I. *membekali diri*) by means of performing the required rituals, in order to face the Hereafter calmly.[159] Although the specific verse actually deals with the performance of the pilgrimage (A. *ḥajj*), it is also (apparently) applicable to the ritual of fasting. The point is that a record of performed ritual actions will come in handy at the day of resurrection, and there thus seems to be no problems in transferring Koranic statements of a specific ritual to other ritual contexts. This has been done in other frameworks too: Burhani has for example argued that the following verse may be equally valid for Ramadanic fasting as for prayer (A. *ṣalāh*) or reciting the Koran.

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[155] Mardjono 2000: 44. See also M.S. Mahfud 2000: 139.
[156] L. Rachman 2000: 12. Cf. Januar 2000a: 12ff.
[157] L. Rachman 2000: 13. Mujiyanto (2000: 70) quotes QS 29:3 in support of this: "Yea, indeed, We did test those who lived before them; and so, [too, shall be tested the people now living: and] most certainly will God mark out those who prove themselves true, and most certainly will He mark out those who are lying.
[158] QS 2:197.
[159] Lopa 2000a: 52, Bisri 2000a: 109.

> Convey [unto others] whatever of this divine writ has been revealed unto thee, and be constant in prayer: for, behold, prayer restrains [man] from loathsome deeds and from all that runs counter to reason; and remembrance of God is indeed the greatest [good]. And God knows all that you do.[160]

Every fire has its flame, and that which has no flame surely is no fire, Burhani says in rather free translation, and holds that if prayer may prevent indecency and evil, so can fasting.[161] Interestingly, a similar transfer of meaning has been made of Haidar Bagir, who argues that the patience (A. *ṣabr*) mentioned in QS 2:45 as a means of achieving divine aid can be equaled to 'fasting' since both terms means to restrain oneself (I. *menahan diri*).[162] Whether *ṣabr*—which is a frequent Koranic term and concept—and *ṣawm* should be used interchangeably throughout the Koran is unfortunately not discussed by Bagir. (In another article, Mujiyanto quotes QS 2:153 and refers to *ṣabr* as an indispensable virtue in facing the divine trials, which Ramadan is an example of.)[163]

The Muslim preoccupation with *performing* something during Ramadan—as dealt with above in the section on Ramadanic handbooks—is given a new dimension by the oft-quoted verse that says,

> ...He may put you to a test [and thus show] which of you is best in conduct, and [make you realize that] He alone is almighty, truly forgiving.[164]

Who is regarded in favor of Allah, Soleh thus notes, is not he who performs the most deeds, but he who carries them out in the best of ways (A. *aḥsan ᶜamal*).[165] Once again, the importance of *niat* (I., intent, A. *nīyah*) and *ikhlas* (I., sincerity, A. *ikhlāṣ*) is called upon, and Soleh argues that the value of the performance of any one deed without a sound amount of sincerity and the right intent, is like the value of a body without a soul. The deed may have some worldly values, but it will never be able to ascend to God (I. *naik kepada Allah*), and is thus virtually without meaning (I. *tanpa makna*). In other words, it is not an *amal sholeh* (I., pious deed, A. *ᶜamal ṣalāḥ*).[166] A deed only becomes *sholeh* if its performance is motivated by sincerity and God, and that is why God will reward not the quantity but rather the quality of the Muslims' deeds. That is also why, Soleh says, verse 183 in *sūratu l-baqarah* begins with the words *yā ayyuhā lladhīna ᵓāmanū* (A., O you who have attained to the faith); fasting is only made compulsory for those who already have attained to the faith, i.e. those who are sincere in their religios-

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[160] QS 29:45.
[161] Burhani 2000a: 84.
[162] Bagir 2002: 13.
[163] Mujiyanto 2000a: 68.
[164] QS 67:2.
[165] Soleh 2000: 65. See also Suhandy 2000: 59ff.
[166] Soleh 2000: 65.

ity. It is only the value of fasting that is backed up by sincere faith, he goes on, that may "rise and be present in the divine presence" (I. *naik ke atas untuk hadir di hadirat Ilahi*).[167] Ali Yafie has drawn attention to another Koranic verse in this respect that says that "all shall be judged according to their [conscious] deeds" and argued that this may refer to all human activity, including religious rituals.[168] This in turn seem to justify al-Ghazzālī's three 'levels' of fasting, which will be discussed below.

In line with this, Burhani also argues that QS 22:32 explains that perfectly performed rituals may result in purified souls. The relevant verse in English translation reads as follows:

> And anyone who honours the symbols set up by God [shall know that,] verily, these [symbols derive their value] from the God-consciousness in the [believer's] hearts.

There are more logical reasons or seeds of encouragement to be found in the Koran concerning the performance of the Ramadanic fast—at least according to Indonesian authors. One such seed is to be found in the last part of verse five of *sūratu l-mā'idah*, which has it that

> ...to Allah is your return, of all (of you), so He will let you know that in which you differed.[169]

God is our home (I. *kampung halaman*) and the place to which we return (I. *tempat kembali kita*), in the words of Jalaluddin Rakhmat.[170] During Ramadan, the same author argues, we temporarily leave the ordinary world which is nothing but "play and a passing delight,"[171] to return home to God. And that is why the month of Ramadan also is known as the month of God (I. *bulan Tuhan*, A. *shahru llāh*).[172]

In line with this reasoning are several other Koranic verses that emphasize the assumption that this worldly life is but a pale copy of what is to come, and that we generally are too fond of the material gains of the present existence. For example:

> Now had We so willed, We could indeed have exalted him by means of [those] messages: but he always clung to the earth and followed but his own desires. Thus, his parable is that of an [excited] dog: if thou approach him threateningly, he will pant with his tongue lolling. Such is the parable of those who are bent on giving the lie to Our messages. Tell [them], then, this story, so that they might take thought.[173]

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[167] Soleh 2000: 65.
[168] QS 6:132. In a note Muhammad Asad adds the following literal translation of the passage: "all shall have grades out of what they did." Yafie 2002: 23.
[169] QS 5:48.
[170] Rakhmat 2000: 148.
[171] QS 6:32.
[172] Rakhmat 2000: 148.
[173] QS 7:176.

> Verily, towards his Sustainer man is most ungrateful –
> and to this, behold, he [himself] bears witness indeed:
> for, verily, to the love of wealth is he most ardently devoted.[174]

In the eyes of God then, humans who only follow their desires (I. *nafsu*) can be likened to animals. Yet there is for humanity a possibility to rise above the degree of the angels—since they simply do not have any desires—by way of getting in total control of oneself, and especially one's *nafsu*. This is preferably done by fasting in Ramadan.[175] In other words, Ramadanic fasting may elevate humans to positions higher than that of the angels.

That the performance of the obligatory *sholat* only can bring positive effects—both to the individual carrying them out and to the society in which he is active—is an Islamic and Koranic truism. Numerous Koranic verses stress the importance of these ritual acts of devotion, and the traditions of the prophet that do the same are even more numerous. Nothing is said, however, about the practice of performing special Ramadanic supererogatory *tarawih* prayers in the Koran. Amien Rais suggest that QS 13:28 may be (indirectly) referred to this practice, in that it says:

> Those who believe and whose hearts are set at rest by the remembrance of Allah;
> now surely by Allah's remembrance are the hearts set at rest.[176]

The idea here is that the time of the nightly prayers is also a time for personal contemplation through remembrance of Allah. This is in my opinion, however, really in the outskirts of the Koranic context for the obligatory fast.

TAKWA: THE AIM OF FASTING

During Ramadan, *takwa* (I., A. *taqwā*) is the single most important theological concept, the attainment of which is the whole aim of holding the month long fast, as laid out in the Koran.[177] Consequently, this term is the subject of some discussion in the present material. (For an introductory discussion of *taqwā/takwa*, see chapter three above.)

Drawing on Imam Qusyairi, Khudori Soleh argues that the meaning of *takwa* can be understood by having a closer look at the Arabic letters the term is made up of (i.e., *t-q-w-y*).[178] The initial *ta* is thus thought to be short for *tawadlu* (A. *tawāḍu*^{c}), meaning 'modesty,' humility,' or 'humbleness.' More

[174] QS 100:6-8.
[175] Ilham 2002: viii-ix. See also Rais 2001a: 80f.
[176] QS 13:28. Rais 2001b: 31. Rais uses the term *qiyamul lail* (I. nightly prayers) rather than *tarawih* here.
[177] QS 2:183.
[178] Soleh 2000: 66ff.

precisely, says Soleh, people who *bertakwa* are people who realize their inferiority towards God, and simultaneously realize that whatever they have in the form of material belongings or social position is nothing but temporary entrustments (I. *titipan*).[179] The Arabic letter *qāf*, to continue, represents *qonaah* (A. *qanā^{c}ah*), having the meaning 'contentment' or 'moderation.' In the words of Soleh, the meaning here is that Muslims should live in simplicity (I. *bersikap sederhana*) and stay away from corruption and unfair behavior of various sorts.[180] Connected to this is also the third letter, which represents *wara'* (A. *wara^{c}*) or 'piousness,' 'timorousness,' or 'shyness.' Thus, Muslims who *bertakwa* will neither engage in non-lawful (I. *tidak halal*) conduct nor in any other (moral) irregularities. The last letter, *yā*, represents *yakin* (A. *yaqīn*), meaning 'certainty' or 'conviction.' The idea here is that Muslims with *takwa* will be so close to God and have such a solid relation with Him, that trials and hardships of various kinds will not dispirit him. He is 'certain' that God will not abnegate His believing subjects (I. *hamba-Nya yang beriman*).[181] From this philological exegesis we can then conclude that the *takwa* fasting is supposed to generate will produce pious, righteous, humble, and steadfast Muslims.

But this is just one elaboration on the concept of *takwa* as presented by contemporary Indonesian scholars. Another look around will provide us with—amongst others—the following definitions of the important term:

> *Takwa* has to be understood in a wide sense, i.e. as a consciousness based on reason and knowledge towards Islamic law, which forces a person to regard *halal* and *haram* as the ultimate criterion for all her activities.[182]

> *Takwa* is the most precious predicate by the side of Allah, [and] the finest life supply needed by humans in order to live in happiness in this world and in the Other. [...] People who [have] *takwa* realize and are convinced that they are constantly seen, heard, and known by Allah, the All-Seeing, All-Hearing, and All-Knowing. That feeling may generate an elevated consciousness to always carry out the commands of Allah, and estrange oneself from His prohibitions.[183]

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[179] Soleh 2000: 66. *Bertakwa* is an Indonesian active, intransitive verb of *takwa*.
[180] Soleh 2000: 67.
[181] Soleh 2000: 68.
[182] Mujiyanto 2000b: 53. *Takwa memiliki pengertian luas, yakni suatu kesadaran yang berlandaskan akal dan pengetahuan terhadap syariat Islam, sehingga seseorang mengharuskan dirinya mengambil yang halal dan yang haram sebagai tolok ukur untuk seluruh aktivitasnya.*
[183] Hasan 2002. *Takwa adalah predikat paling mulia di sisi Allah, bekal hidup yang paling baik yang diperlukan oleh setiap manusia agar dapat hidup bahagia di dunia dan di akhirat.* [...] *Orang yang takwa menyadari dan meyakini bahwa dirinya senantiasa dilihat, didengar, dan diketahui oleh Allah yang maha-melihat, maha-mendengar dan maha-mengetahui. Perasaan tersebut dapat membangkitkan kesadaran yang tinggi untuk selalu melaksanakan perintah-perintah Allah dan menjauhi larangan-larangan-Nya.*

> *Takwa* is the mother of all virtue, the source of all goodness, and the origin of all piety—both for the individual and for society at large. As such, *takwa* is the most precious supply in human life.[184]

We thus see that the praise of *takwa* hardly knows any limits. Indeed, the Koran itself repeatedly emphasizes the importance of *takwa*, as discussed by Hasan.[185] Overall, one can say that the presence of *takwa* during Ramadan, according to these Indonesian writers, is that entity which differentiates mere hunger and thirst from meaningful fasting. As we have seen above, there is a *hadits* that reads:

> Whoever does not give up forged speech and evil actions, Allah is not in need of his leaving his food and drink (i.e. Allah will not accept his fasting).[186]

This tradition—or rather, the essence of it in various forms—is repeatedly highlighted in Java during Ramadan, and there is a wide consensus that a substantial part of the fasting Muslim community would be better off not fasting at all. Since their fasting is not based on sincere *takwa*, it is argued, they will obtain nothing but hunger and thirst, and could have spared themselves the monthly exercise. For them, Ramadan is just an "annual routine tradition."[187]

Through our Indonesian articles so far, *takwa* could be described as a divine consciousness that simultaneously is the source of all good and a human necessity in life. However, *takwa* does not solely concern *hablum minallah* (I., the relation with God), but also *hablum minannas* (I., the human relations). It is consequently not sufficient to perform the obligatory fast—even if based on sincerity—if the performer still engages in moral irregularities of various kinds. Neither is it permissible to let go of the *takwa* during the eleven post-Ramadanic months. Little use is there, Januar amongst others argues, to abstain from sexual relations with one's wife during Ramadan if one is unfaithful to that same woman once Ramadan is over. Likewise, to read the Koran during Ramadan will be in vain if one engages in corruption and deception post-Ramadan. More precisely, these are all acts of insult towards the fast itself (I. *pelecehan terhadap puasanya sendiri*).[188]

Amien Rais, a well-known Indonesian modernist, has devoted a whole series of short articles to the issue of *takwa* in relation to Ramadan.[189] In the

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[184] Shahab 2000a: 62. *Takwa merupakan induk dari segala kebajikan, sumber dari segala kebaikan, dan asal dari segala kesalehan, baik bagi individu maupun masyarakat. Dengan begitu, takwa merupakan bekal paling baik dalam hidup manusia.*

[185] Hasan 2002. Hasan mentions QS 2:197, 65:2, 65:4, 5:27, and 52:17.

[186] ḤB 3,31,127.

[187] Januar 2000a: 14.

[188] Januar 2000a: 13f.

[189] These articles were initially published in the Yogyakarta based daily *Kedaulatan Rakyat* during Ramadan in 1995 and 1996; all references here, however, are to the compilation of his

first of these, he establishes that people who *bertakwa* are people who are guarded over (I. *terpelihara*) in a wide sense. More precisely, they are

> ...guarded over from a variety of sins, guarded over from moral bankruptcy, guarded over from various unbearable life disasters, guarded over from arrogance, guarded over from avarice, guarded over from immorality, and so on, and so on. In short, [they are] guarded over from a variety of negative matters that may attract the wrath of Allah, the Exalted.[190]

In line with QS 2:1-5, Rais continues, the primary sign (I. *tanda utama*) of a person who *bertakwa* is that she has faith (I. *beriman*) and believes in God, the prophets, the angels, the existence of heaven and hell, and in the coming of the Day of Resurrection. Without having faith in all this, the presence of *takwa* is unthinkable, and the person in question runs the risk of becoming a dangerous secularist and materialist (I. *sekularis dan materialis yang berbahaya*), something which is unimaginable for a Muslim who *bertakwa*.[191] Moreover, people who believe they are constantly observed, examined, and followed by God will necessary develop deep feelings of *takwa*.[192] But Muslim faith is not limited to what was revealed to Muhammad, and Muslims are consequently obliged to believe in previous revelations too (see QS 3:84). As a result of this, people who *bertakwa* show a great amount of tolerance towards followers of non-Islamic religions.[193]

Another sign of people who *bertakwa*, according to Rais, is their never failing willingness to spend a portion of their belongings (I. *berinfak*) in the interest of the wider Muslim community. Indeed, it is virtually impossible to hold the epithet *bertakwa* and simultaneously be avaricious, stingy, and greedy, and this is due to the fact that people who *bertakwa* do not believe that salvation is dependent on material belongings. Generosity, then, is an unconditional part of *takwa*.[194] Readers are encouraged to recall QS 100:8 cited above: "And most surely he is tenacious in the love of wealth."

As we have repeatedly seen in this work, Javanese Muslims claim that it is not sufficient to abstain from food, drink, and sexual relations during daytime Ramadan—"forged speech and evil actions" have to be abandoned too. In line with this, people who *bertakwa* naturally also control their anger (I. *menahan amarah*), the reward of which in the Koran is said to be divine

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Ramadanic articles. The concept of *takwa* has also been discussed by Rais in his well-known work *Tauhid Sosial* (1988: 46ff).

[190] Rais 2001c: 72. *Terpelihara dari segenap dosa – terpelihara dari kebangkrutan akhlak – terpelihara dari berbagai musibah kehidupan yang tak tertahankan – terpelihara dari kesombongan – terpelihara dari keserakahan – terpelihara dari kezaliman – dan sebagainya, dan sebagainya. Pendek kata terpelihara dari berbagai hal negatif yang dapat mendatangkan murka Allah SWT.*

[191] Rais 2001d: 74.

[192] Rais 2001d: 77.

[193] Rais 2001f: 83.

[194] Rais 2001e: 80.

forgiveness and Paradise.[195] Of course, says Amien Rais, even people who *bertakwa* cannot withhold their anger at times, but they differ in comparison with their non-*takwa* equivalents in that they do not let themselves become totally bewildered (I. *kalap*), run amuck (I. *gelap mata*), or leave behind sound rational judgement (I. *pertimbangan rasional*) due to this wrath. Moreover, they will also be soon to forgive whoever caused them to become angry in the first place, and thus avoid that feelings of spite and grudge grow into serious spiritual illnesses.[196] In a similar manner, Muslims with *takwa* may also commit sins and errors from time to time, but what signals that they indeed do *bertakwa* is that they will quickly realize their malpractice, ask God for forgiveness, and sincerely state their intent not to repeat their mistake. Rais, Muslim modernist as he is, makes a point of this argument when he says that erring Muslims with *takwa* runs to God (I. *lari ke Tuhan*) to ask for forgiveness, and not to *dukun* (I., traditional healer, 'magician') of various sorts.[197]

In the *takwa* series of Rais, two more signs of Muslims who *bertakwa* are singled out, namely that of holding promises (I. *menepati janji*) and remaining patient (I. *bersabar*) in various situations. The first of these is referred to the Koran, which legibly encourages Muslims to "be true to every promise."[198] In the words of Rais, promises are like debts—they have to be paid in time, and this is valid both for promises made to fellow humans as well as to God.[199] The importance of *sabar* (I., patience, A. *ṣabr*) has been dealt with elsewhere in this work—suffice it here to mention that Rais holds that patience is a sign of *takwa*, and that the life-histories of all the prophets (especially that of Muhammad) may be studied in order to understand the meaning of this concept.[200]

This discussion of *takwa* as depicted and portrayed in Indonesian newspaper articles could have been prolonged in seeming infinity (taking into consideration the ample material). What has been presented above, however, suffice in the present context, and I believe we now have gained an understanding of the importance of *takwa* in relation to Ramadan in Indonesia (and elsewhere in the Muslim world, of course).

IMPLEMENTING RAMADANIC VALUES

There is wide consensus among Indonesian scholars that there is more to Ramadan than to refrain from eating, drinking, and having sexual relations during daytime, and to perform supererogatory prayers and read the Koran

[195] QS 3:134-136.
[196] Rais 2001g: 88f.
[197] Rais 2001h: 92.
[198] QS 17: 34. Rais 2001i: 96.
[199] Rais 2001i: 96.
[200] Rais 2001j: 99f.

during the nights. It is not sufficient, they generally argue, just to pay attention to the theological, private, or ritual aspects of Ramadan, and leave the holy month's social dimension unobserved. In other words, the values and boons of Ramadanic fasting have to be implemented and materialized in the midst of the daily life of the Muslim community. In Indonesia, issues like these are recurring themes in Ramadanic articles, and some of these will be discussed here.

Reading through the material, I was immediately struck by the coherence of ideas these articles exhibit, and slowly but steadily I grew quite bored by it. It was as if all the articles in this 'genre' were molded in the same form, in that they presented the same ideas and themes over and over again. Consequently, I was initially rather discouraged to write this section. Having let the material 'rest' for a while, I realized, however, that these articles actually are very interesting—as long as one does not read forty or fifty of them successively. The discussion of the material is here divided into three parts, that discuss (1) a general understanding of the ritual of fasting and the current situation in Indonesia; (2) what the fast 'does' to fasting Muslims; and (3) what hoped for effects this has in Muslim society, or in other words, how Ramadanic values are implemented in society.

Since mid-1997, Indonesia has experienced a prolonged crisis that began as an economic disaster, but soon 'developed' into what is commonly referred to as a *krisis multidimensional* (I., multidimensional crisis). This *krisis* is portrayed as consisting of various constituents: political, economical, social, and so on. It succeeded in bringing an end to the long and authoritarian rule of President Soeharto in 1998, but has since then caused various non-pleasant conditions and events in the country. The high expectations on the era of reformation (I. *era reformasi*) have at large remained unfulfilled, and many Indonesians have become discouraged by the new era's inability to cope with their vulnerable positions. In connection with Ramadan, Indonesian *ulama* and scholars stress that the essence and cause of the multidimensional crisis is nothing but an underlying moral crisis.[201] In the words of Azizy,

> By religion [i.e., Islam] we are compelled to act trustworthy, yet not few act treacherously. We are enjoined to act fairly, yet not few of our leaders and promoters are full of immorality. We are enjoined to behave honestly, yet deception rages in every social layer. Likewise, falsehood dominates our lives. We are forbidden to slander, yet not few of our leaders and common people practice slander, oppose one party with another, act as provocateurs, and so on.[202]

[201] See for example Sukidi 2000, Azizy 2000.

[202] Azizy 2000: 58f. *Oleh agama, kita disuruh mempraktikkan amanat, namun tidak sedikit yang menpraktikkan khianat. Kita disuruh adil, namun tidak sedikit tokoh dan pemimpin kita penuh dengan praktik kezaliman. Kita disuruh jujur, namun kecurangan telah merajalela di seluruh lapisan masyarakat. Demikian pula kebohongan telah mendominasi kehidupan kita. Kita dilarang memfitnah, namun tidak sedikit pemuka kita dan masyarakat kita yang suka mempraktikkan fitnah, adu domba, menjadi provokator, dan semacamnya.*

There is, so to speak, a discrepancy between actual and hoped-for morals, and this is rather disturbing to some Indonesians, who are bothered and ashamed by the fact that their country is both the largest Muslim country in the world, as well as that in which corruption is most widespread. This, they argue, is due to the fact that Indonesian Muslims only observe *one* aspect or dimension of the Islamic religion, and elide the other. Writing in 2001, Thohari thus observed that Ramadan already had passed by no less than four times since the commencement of the crisis, without, however, substantially altering the condition of the country—which it should have, remembering all the boons and extraordinary qualities of this month. This is due, according to the author, to the fact that Indonesian Muslims only care about the individual-spiritual side of Ramadan, and neglect the social-moral equivalent.[203]

Numerous other authors have noticed this problem and made it their main theme in various articles. One of them is Burhani, who we may quote here:

> Islam demands that the fulfillment of the private ethics only should be an initial prerequisite for the fulfillment of the social ethics. Social structure and individual structure have to walk hand in hand. A vertical ritual will not be appreciated by God if it is not accompanied by horizontal rituals. The success of man as a moral actor will be measured by his success in wading through both the private and the social life. Thus, man will be regarded as committing a sin if he only lives in asceticism and exists in monastic surroundings, without paying any heed to the condition of the people.[204]

In connection to Ramadan, he states elsewhere that fasting in the holy month is not just a *cultus privatus* with interior dimensions, but also a *cultus publicus* with exterior equivalents. Thus, the effect of fasting will flow (I. *mengalir*) from one level (the private) to another (the social).[205] In the words of another thinker, "God willingly, from private piety, social piety will take form."[206] This is in line with the idea that every act has to take into consideration two things: how it affects one's relationship with God (I. *hablum minallah*), and how it affects one's relationship with fellow humans (I. *hablum minannas*). This is of extreme importance, taking into consideration that no ritual,

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[203] Thohari 2001.

[204] Burhani 2000b: 35f. *islam menuntut pemenuhan tuntutan-tuntutan etika pribadi sebagai persyaratan awal bagi pemenuhan etika sosial. Tata sosial dan tata indivudu haruslah seiring. Sebuah ritus vertikal dianggap tidak bernilai di hadapan Tuhan bila tanpa dibarengi dengan ritus horisontal. Keberhasilan manusia sebagai pelaku moral diukur dari kesuksesan yang dicapainya dalam mengarungi kehidupan pribadi dan sosial kemasyarakatan. Dengan demikian, seseorang dinilai berdosa apabila hanya bertapa durja dan bereksistensi monastik dengan memicingkan mata dari keadaan masyarakat.*

[205] Burhani 2000a: 81f.

[206] Takaryawan 2002. *Insya Allah, bermula dari kesalehan pribadi akan terbentuk kesalehan sosial.*

> ...including the ritual of fasting, in the eyes of Islam has any value unless it has a positive impact internally on the performer, as well as externally on his fellows.[207]

This, in turn, is in line with QS 21:107 which has it that Muhammad (and thus, Islam) was sent by God as a grace towards the entire world (A. *raḥmatan lil-ᶜālamīn*). Consequently, Islam was not intended to God, but to humanity.[208]

Having said this, we might proceed to the second theme proposed for discussion here, namely that of what the Ramadanic fast 'does'—or rather, 'should do'—to fasting Muslims on a moral level. Fasting, it is repeatedly argued, will evoke feelings of affection (I. *iba*) and pity (I. *kasihan*) towards the pauper (I. *fakir-miskin*) elements of society.[209] This is of course due to the fact that by fasting, even the most well-off Muslims can gain a partial understanding of the lives of the poor by refraining from food and drink. They will, in a way, live the lives of the poor during daytime—although they probably will break the fast, for example, quite differently from them when that time comes. Nevertheless, fasting will make them conscious of other people's fates, something that will result in feelings of compassion (I. *empati*), sympathy (I. *simpati*), and social solidarity (I. *solidaritas sosial*).[210] This, in turn, will result in a willingness and readiness on their behalf to lessen the burden of their misfortunate fellow Muslims.[211] When the republic was seriously threatened by disintegration in 2001, the Minister of Religion, Al Munawar, expressed this as follows:

> During Ramadan, our souls and spirits will be connected to whatever our fellows experience, in order to provide us with spirits full of goodness, love, compassion, and social solidarity. Apart from social attention, especially towards the pauper, and the ability to suppress our private desires and maintain spiritual clarity, the habit of performing *tarawih* prayers in congregation will create a spirit of togetherness. And a spirit of togetherness is the primary asset for unity and social integration. And integration and unity is a prerequisite for the construction of a peaceful, harmonious, just, and safe life together.[212]

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[207] Ghazali 2001. *...tak terkecuali ibadah puasa, dalam pandangan Islam tidak memiliki nilai apa pun kalau tidak mempunyai dampak positif, secara internal pada dirinya dan secara eksternal pada orang lain sekaligus.* See also for example Al Munawar 2001, Mardjono 2000, Maksun 2002.

[208] Mufidah 2002. (Mufidah's article is aptly entitled "Fasting Answers the Problems of the Community.")

[209] N. Rachman 2000: 132, Sukidi 2000, Al Munawar 2001, Mufidah 2002.

[210] Thohari 2001.

[211] Audah 2000: 140.

[212] Al Munawar 2001. *Selama Ramadhan, jiwa dan nurani kita sekligus dihubungkan dengan apa yang dialami orang lain agar kita memiliki jiwa yang penuh kebaikan, kasih sayang, empati, dan solidaritas sosial. Di samping kepedulian sosial, khususnya terhadap fakir miskin, dan kemampuan menahan nafsu pribadi dan kejernihan rohani, kebiasaan salat berjemaah dan tarawih akan menciptakan jiwa kebersamaan. Jiwa kebersamaan merupakan modal dasar bagi perastuan dan kesatuan masyarakat. Sedangkan kesatuan dan persatuan merupakan praysarat bagi terbangunnya kehidupan bersama yang damai, harmonis, adil, dan aman.*

One should also remember—the authors of these articles say—that the prophet Muhammad unfailingly gave precedence to his fellows, and never surrounded himself by any luxury.[213] He rarely had any food at his house, and encouraged his followers to stop eating before having their fills. In an oft-cited *hadits* he is also quoted as having said that a man, who is sound asleep due to being satiated whereas his neighbor is starving, cannot be called a man of faith.[214] Moreover, in a *hadits* cited by Suyuti, the prophet is reported to have encouraged his wife Aisyah (A. ᶜĀʾishah) to constantly knock on heaven's door (A. *bābu l-jannah*). When she asked with what she should knock, the prophet answered: "with hunger" (A. *bi l-jūᶜ*).[215]

Now, how should the Ramadanic values be practically implemented in Muslim society? Or, how should the theoretical effects of fasting materialize in the daily life of the community? First, we should note that Indonesian scholars and writers frequently regard Ramadan as a momentum (I. *momentum*), and consider it to be the perfect springboard not only for moral but also social, political, and economical improvement.

The most frequently mentioned practical implementation of what we might call a Ramadanic consciousness is that of payment of various 'tithes' or 'taxes' to the needy. Two frequently cited Koranic verses read:

> [But as for you, O believers,] never shall you attain to true piety unless you spend on others out of what you cherish yourself; and whatever you spend – verily, God has full knowledge thereof.[216]

> [Hence, O Prophet] accept that [part] of their possessions which is offered for the sake of God, so that thou mayest cleanse them thereby and cause them to grow in purity, and pray for them: behold, thy prayer will be [a source of] comfort to them - for God alone is an acceptor of repentance, a dispenser pf grace[217]

Muslims should thus pay *zakat* (I., A. *zakāh*, tithes), *sedekah* (I., A. *ṣadaqah*, charities), and *infak* (I., A. *infāq*, disbursements), and be ever-ready to provide for their more unfortunate fellows.[218] Apart from creating feelings of brotherhood and solidarity across different social classes, the payment of *zakat* also cleanses and purifies both one's economical belongings and one's self.[219] Indonesian scholars lay special stress on the Ramadanic obligatory charity, *zakat fitrah* (I., A. *zakātu l-fiṭrah*; also known as A. *ṣadaqatu l-fiṭr,* I. *sedekah fitri, zakatulfitri*), which has to be paid before the performance of the *id* prayers, so to ensure that nobody suffers from thirst or hunger on the pros-

[213] N. Racham 2000: 132, Shahab 2000b: 83, L. Rachman 2000: 14.
[214] See for example Nashir 2000: 123.
[215] Suyuti 1996: 76.
[216] QS 3:92.
[217] QS 9:103.
[218] Shahab 2000c: 107.
[219] Zada 2001.

perous day of *Idul Fitri*. This *sedekah fitrah* or *zakatulfitri* is enjoined upon all Muslims (free and slaves, men and women, young and old), and represents, in the words of Antoun, "the culminating act of generosity" during the month of Ramadan.[220] It is by no means large, and does not constitute a great burden for most Muslims. According to *ḥadīthic* material, it is to consist of one *ṣā'* (A., approximately three kilograms) of barely (A. *sha'īr*), dates (A. *tamr*), raisins (A. *zabīb*), or dried yogurt (A. *iqṭ*).[221] Occasionally, however, the material only mentions one *ṣā'* of food (A. *ṭa'ām*),[222] and this is the basis for the Javanese who generally pay their *zakatulfitri* in rice.[223]

In a wider sense, the effects of Ramadanic fasting is thought to materialize in the form of social honesty (I. *kejujuran*) and tolerance (I. *toleransi*), and a conscious avoidance of corruption, collusion, and nepotism (I. *KKN; korupsi, kolusi, nepotisme*). It is especially hoped for that politicians gain this Ramadanic consciousness, and leave behind their actions of immorality that deprive the interests of the common people.[224] Moreover, Ramadan is thought to provide fertile ground for planting seeds of social reconciliation through the development of social wisdom (I. *kearifan sosial*),[225] and to constitute a constructive contribution to the settlement of the prolonged crisis.[226] Reflecting upon the internal conflicts that took place within two of the largest political parties in Indonesia (PKB and PPP) during Ramadan in 2001, Fachruddin, however, noted that such hoped for achievements will be devoid of materialization as long as Muslim politicians regard Ramadan only as a private ritual. His words may conclude this section:

> ...Ramadan, which emphasizes high morals and spiritual politics, has yet to influence the orientation, behavior, and decision taking process in the circle of Muslim politicians. Had it already done this, conflicts that head for party disintegration would of course never need to occur. And even if they were to occur, they should have resulted in dynamics, creative tension, and consensus.[227]

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[220] Antoun 1968a: 39.
[221] See the *zakāt al-fiṭr* section in Bukhārī's and Muslim's collections of traditions.
[222] For example ḤB 2,25,582; 2,25,586.
[223] Depending on quality, the price of three kilos of rice was in 2002 between Rp. 3,500-6,000, that is, well below one USD. Nurcholish Madjid (in Gaus 2000: 118) is critical of this amount, and argues that fifteen centuries old Arabic norms cannot in this case be transformed without alteration to modern Indonesia. Drawing on this he argues further that the amount of *zakat fitrah* should correspond to what one person spends on food an average day, and thus not be standardized to three kilos of rice.
[224] Lopa 2000b, Burhani 2000a, N. Rachman 2000, Moh. Mahfud 2000, Ghazali 2001.
[225] Mulkhan 2000: 125f.
[226] Effendy 2000: 87.
[227] Fachruddin 2001. *...ibadah Ramadan, yang begitu menekankan ketinggian moral dan spiritual politik belum mempengaruhi orientasi, perilaku dan proses pengambilan keputusan di kalangan politikus Islam. Kalau sudah, tentunya konflik yang menjurus disintegrasi partai tidak perlu terjadi. Kalau toh terjadi konflik, seyogianya konflik tersebut haruslah mengarah kepada dinamika, ketegangan kreatif* (tension) *serta konsensus* (islah). [Note that the words within parenthesizes in the original have been omitted in my translation above.]

As discussed above, the Ramadanic handbooks' treatment of *Lebaran* or *Idul Fitri* was largely confined to the special *id* prayers and the *khutbah* (I., sermon). In contrast to this, the articles considered here provide no such ritual guidance, but rather concentrate on the more theoretical aspects of the feast. Most of the *Lebaran* articles provide similar discussions and information, and provide, again, quite dull reading if one is exposed to dozens of them during one and the same day. The general Javanese Muslim probably only reads one or two of these per year, and in such cases they imaginably become quite interesting.

One recurring theme in these articles is that of *Idul Fitri* as a Day of Victory (I. *Hari Kemenangan*) in which believing Muslims are returned to their pure (I. *fitrah*, A. *fiṭrah*) character and disposition. The picturing of *Lebaran* as a victorious day is based on the belief that the fasting Muslims have been tried and tested by God during the last month, and that those who have performed their fast satisfyingly will have their sins expunged, at the same time as their sense of *takwa* will increase. As we have seen elsewhere, fasting in Ramadan is at times also portrayed as the greater *jihad*, and a positive outcome from such a battle is of course aptly denoted as a victory. Thus, *Lebaran* could be said to be a present (I. *hadiah*) to the believers,[228] a kind of divine entertainment (I. *hiburan dari Allah*),[229] or even a sort of spiritual graduation ceremony (I. *wisuda spiritual*).[230] At the day of *Idul Fitri*, Muslims are reborn (I. *lahir kembali*), it is repeatedly stated in these articles, whereby their status can be likened to that of a newborn child. As Islam does not acknowledge any ideas of an original sin, such newborn children are portrayed as pure, holy, and free from sins—or, in short, *fitrah*. Elaborating on the concept of *fitrah*, Priyono says that

> What is meant by *fitrah* is a purity and holiness from pre-Islamic values and unbelief, an existence in full acknowledgement of the divine oneness, with a heart that bows and confirms to the unity of Allah as his Creator.[231]

The state of *fitrah* is referred to in the Koran only as a 'natural disposition,'[232] whereas in our Ramadanic articles it is thought to include numerous aspects and have several postive effects. Suparto thus notes four ideal meanings of *Idul Fitri* based on the concept of *fitrah*. The first of these is the commence-

[228] SA Anwar 2002.
[229] Wahid 2000: 108.
[230] Sukidi 2001.
[231] Priyono 2000: 103. *Fitrah yang dimaksudkan adalah bersih, suci dari nilai-nilai jahiliyah dan kekufuran, berada dalam keadaan bertauhid, hatinya tunduk dan patuh kepada keesaan Allah sebagai penciptanya.*
[232] QS 30:30. This is the only Koranic verse which uses the noun *fiṭrah*.

ment or birth of a self-reformation that heads for an *uswah ḥasanah* (A., excellent example; see QS 33:21) character. At *Idul Fitri* God is internalized (I. *Tuhan sudah mempribadi*), it is argued, and the person in question will feel the divine presence in all aspects of life. The second meaning as proposed by Suparto is that of a move away from material attraction to spiritual significance, i.e. the realization that life is only for Allah. This consciousness will make a Muslim invulnerable to worldly temptations and materialism, and keep him on the straight path. The third meaning of *Idul Fitri* is that of the building of feelings of togetherness free from social or economical differentiation—that is, a condition attained temporarily during the *id* prayers in which everybody joins in under the same conditions. The last point made by Suparto is that of the day of *Lebaran* as a starting point for the creation of strong, diligent, and positive human characters.[233] In a similar vein of thinking, Sukidi argues that *Idul Fitri* makes people become enlightened (I. *tercerahkan*) at the same time as it frees the Muslim community from all its shackles,[234] whereas Qodir speaks of *Idul Fitri* as a way towards God (I. *jalan menuju Tuhan*) that gives birth to tolerant and inclusive Muslims, and estranges them from exclusivism and intolerance.[235] As we saw the whole of Ramadan was above, the feast of *Idul Fitri* is thus at times also portrayed as a momentum (I. *momentum*) for improvements of various kinds.[236]

Another important concept in the Indonesian context for the end of Ramadan is that of what the Indonesians call either *halalbihalal* (I.) or *silaturahmi* (I.).[237] This concept has neither Koranic nor *ḥadīthic* support—at least not in connection to *Idul Fitri*—but is of extreme importance to Javanese and Indonesian Muslims during the end of Ramadan. Indeed, without *silaturahmi* or *halalbihalal* there would hardly be any *Lebaran*, according to the Javanese view. What is then meant by these terms? The word *silaturahmi* is derived from the two Arabic words *ṣilah*, meaning 'connection,' 'bond,' 'link,' and *raḥīm*, meaning 'merciful,' 'compassionate.'[238] A common Indonesian translation is *tali persaudaraan*, which could be represented in English as 'bonds of friendship' or 'bonds of brotherhood.' As the term *silaturahmi* in Indonesian not only can be employed as noun but also as verb, it is also used to signify any activity which strives at ameliorating bonds of friendship, or one's relations with various persons and/or institutions. Several *hadits* support the importance of *silaturahmi*, and Indonesian collections of traditions and other works on hoped-for Muslim behavior usually hold a

[233] Suparto 2001.
[234] Sukidi 2001.
[235] Qodir 2001. See also for example Wahid 2000, Dahlan 2002, SA Anwar 2002, and Mulkhan 2002b.
[236] Arifin 2000: 181, Sukidi 2001.
[237] At times also *silaturrahmi, silaturrahim*, and *silaturahim*.
[238] Wahyunanto 2000: 111.

special entry for it.[239] However, none of these *hadits* make special mention of the connection between *silaturahmi* and *Idul Fitri*, and Indonesian authors are quick to note that this is a purely Indonesian—and praiseworthy—practice.[240] Indeed, anyone striving for worldly and afterworldly prosperity (I. *selamat dunia-akhirat*) cannot disregard the importance of *silaturahmi*.[241] At *silaturahmi* occasions Javanese Muslims usually ask their relatives, friends, colleagues, etc, for forgiveness—the underlying idea of which is that human forgiveness would be a great complement to the promised divine forgiveness at the day of *Lebaran*.

The last topic to be shortly touched upon here is that of the dating of *Idul Fitri*. Not overwhelmingly much attention is paid this topic in Ramadanic articles, but those discussing it generally agree that different opinions concerning the exact date for concluding the month long fast does not need to constitute seeds of conflict or controversy. This view is well captured in an article written by Abdul Mu'ti, in which he states that what is needed in this regard is tolerance and respect, and an awareness that differences in opinion is nothing but *sunnatullah* (I., the way of God, A. *sunnatu llāh*). There is no need, he argues further, to try to merge the two opinions into a general compromise, since the matter involves questions of faith, and neither is there any need or room for feelings of superiority on behalf of the other group. In fact, we should enjoy the differences (I. *menikmati perbedaan*) the Indonesian *umat* exhibits.[242] Similar opinions were expressed in different editorials in 2002 as *Lebaran* drew close,[243] and daily interviews with religious leaders in various media raised analogous voices.

POPULAR TRADITIONS AND OTHER SAYINGS

Before closing this section on Ramadanic articles, we should have a brief look at some sayings and traditions that are repeatedly quoted by Indonesian scholars. This is interesting since it conveys a picture of normative Ramadan as presented to the general Indonesian public.[244]

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[239] The work of Hasbi & Zaitunah—which discusses the question of how to form Muslim personalities on the authenticity of prophetic traditions—, for example, have a rather substantial part devoted to the subject (1989: 71-79).

[240] Januar 2000b: 99, Wahyuyanto 2000: 111, Mahfudhz 2000: 173, Madjid in Gaus 2000: 114. Chalil (1970: 151) is more careful and argues that the practice also houses potential dangers, in that Muslims may believe this practice to be an obligatory Islamic ritual. There is also a danger in the fact that the practice becomes so institutionalized that it virtually looses its meaning, he argues.

[241] Bisri 2001.

[242] Mu'ti 2002.

[243] See for example *Kompas* 2002-12-05, *Suara Merdeka* 2002-11-29.

[244] I have omitted extensive references in this section due to the fact that interested readers will find these popular traditions and other sayings in virtually any Ramadanic article.

As already discussed, a frequently quoted *hadits* has it that there is much more to fasting than abstaining from food, drinks, and sexual relations during daytime, in that is says that God will not accept fasting which stays at this elementary level.[245] This brings us to the most commonly cited (in Ramadanic contexts) non-Koranic and non-*ḥadīthic* saying in Indonesia, namely that of al-Ghazālī (d.1111) in which he says that there are three different grades or levels of fasting. This he wrote in his famous *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūmu d-dīn* (A., The Revival of the Religious Sciences), which exists in several (partial) English and Indonesian translations.[246] The first proposed level is that of *ṣawmu l-ʿumūm* (A., fast of the general public), which hardly goes beyond abstaining from eating, drinking, and having sexual relations. The second, however, the *ṣawmu l-khuṣūṣ* (A., fast of the select few), includes—in addition to the prerequisites of *ṣawmu l-ʿumūm*—"to keep the ears, the eyes, the tongue, and hands, and the feet as well as the other senses free from sin."[247] How this is performed is extensively elaborated upon in the *Iḥyāʾ*. The last and highest degree of fasting Muslims, according to al-Ghazālī, is that of *ṣawm khuṣūṣu l-khuṣūṣ* (A., fast of the elite among the select few). People included in this small group devote themselves wholeheartedly to "the fast of the heart from mean thoughts and worldly worries and its complete unconcern with anything but God."[248] After having discussed the characteristics of the three different fasts, al-Ghazālī then concludes by saying that

> It is clear, then, that every act of worship is possessed of an outward form and an inner [secret], an external husk and internal pith. The husks are of different grades and each grade has different layers. It is for you to choose whether to be content with the husk or join the company of the wise and the learned.[249]

With this in mind, Sukidi portrays Ramadan as a spiritual climbing (I. *pendakian spiritual*) which ultimately—should the climber reach the top—results in the realization of QS 2:115: "And God's is the east and the west: and wherever you turn, there is God's countenance. Behold, God is infinite, all-knowing."[250]

As for the Koran, the most common cited verse is naturally QS 2:183 which presents the fast as an obligatory ritual act, and reveals its aim, i.e. the attainment of *takwa.* This is not surprising, and neither is it surprising that many Javanese Muslims are familiar with this verse—in detail or in substance—due to it being quoted not only in Ramadanic articles but also in all other popular media during this month. Surprising is it, however, that Yocum's informants in Turkey "seldom, if ever" referred to the Koran when

[245] ḤB 3,31,127.
[246] References are here to Faris 1992. For an Indonesian translation worthy of reading, see Al-Baqir [1990] 2002.
[247] Faris 1992: 23.
[248] Faris 1992: 23.
[249] Faris 1992: 32.
[250] Sukidi 2000: 102f.

he asked them about their reason for fasting.[251] This would not happen in Indonesia.

To move over to the world of *hadits*, we find that there are a few prophetic traditions that hold greater possibilities of showing up in Ramadanic articles than others. I will mention the four most oft-quoted *hadits* here, and comment briefly upon them.

1. The Prophet said: "Whoever fasted the month of Ramadan out of sincere Faith (i.e. belief) and hoping for a reward from Allah, then all his past sins will be forgiven..."[252]

2. Allah's Apostle said: "When the month of Ramadan starts, the gates of the heaven are opened and the gates of Hell are closed and the devils are chained."[253]

3. (Allah says about the fasting person), "He has left his food, drink and desires for My sake. The fast is for Me. So I will reward (the fasting person) for it and the reward of good deeds is multiplied ten times."[254]

4. The first part of this blessed month is Mercy, the second part is Forgiveness, and the third part is Freedom from the Fire of Hell.[255]

The first two *aḥādīth* provide good reason for any Muslim to perform the fast, in that they bring promises of divine rewards in the form of God's forgiveness and flung up doors to heaven. In the third tradition, which is a *ḥadīth qudsī*, God says that fasting is for Him and that He Himself will reward all the *ṣāʾimūn* (A., people fasting, pl. of *ṣāʾim*). These are all undisputed traditions that bring good hopes and enthusiasm for the fasting Muslims.

The last *hadits* is also extremely popular in Indonesia and can be heard and read in various situations. Most people take this tradition at face value, and some arrange their fasting according to it, but we should note that there also exist critical voices in regard to it. These critical voices argue that the *hadits* is not sound due to a doubtful transmission, and should consequently be ignored.[256] However, these voices are low—if audible—and mostly neglected.

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[251] Yocum 1992: 213. See further chapter six for a discussion of Ramadanic practices outside Java and Indonesia.
[252] ḤB 3,31,231. Cf. ḤB 3,31,125.
[253] ḤB 3,31,123. Cf. ḤB 3,31,122; ḤM 6,2361; 6,2362.
[254] ḤB3,31,118. Cf. ḤM 6,2564.
[255] This is a part of the prophet's Ramadan sermon, quoted in various contexts. The present translation is from http://www.sharia-institute.org/sermonof.htm [accessed 2003-06-25]. For an Indonesian translation, see Syihab 1995: 3.
[256] Cf. Thalib 1998: 132f. and *Jurnal Islam* 2002.

ORAL RECORDED LITERATURE

During my stay in Yogyakarta, a local radio broadcaster transmitted Islamic lessons every morning at 5 a.m. Each sermon, recorded live in the presence of a loud audience, lasted for half an hour or so, and held much the same function as the *kuliah subuh* (I., dawn lessons/sermons) held in larger mosques adjacent to the dawn ritual prayer in Java. (Minor mosques and prayer houses too, especially during Ramadan, occasionally give *kuliah subuh*.) With great enjoyment and, initially at least, linguistic hardship, I often listened to these sermons; they served as good company while lightening up my kerosene stove in order to make a cup of Java. I later understood that the sermons were delivered by the country's most famous 'preacher' (A. *khaṭīb* pl. *khuṭabāʾ*, I. *khatib*), and that I was far from alone in listening to them routinely. A friend of mine even confessed that he used to record the sermons and listen to them in the evening. Later I also learned that some of these sermons are professionally recorded and published in the form of audio-cassettes, distributed and widely available throughout Java and Indonesia. It is with some of these recordings we will concern ourselves below.

The most common Islamic sermons are the one delivered at the Friday service (A. *khuṭbatu l-jumʿah*, I. *khutbah Jum'at*) and at the occasion of the two Muslim feasts (A. *khuṭbatu l-ʿīdayn*, I. *khutbah id*)—when they occur in connection with ritual worship—, and for these there are some standard rules and regulations that they have to live up to.[257] Other sermons can be held at various occasions and need not conform to these rules; some, however, still do. A sermon is delivered by a 'preacher,' and Muhammad is, of course, thought to be the first and greatest preacher in Muslim history. Some of the *khuṭabāʾ* he delivered are recorded in the *ḥadīth* literature.

The two most well-known and popular *khatib* in contemporary Indonesia are without doubt KH Zainuddin MZ (b. 1952) and KH Abdullah Gymnastiar (b. 1962). (It was the voice of the former that cut through the Javanese morning mist by way of my radio.) Both of these are to be regarded as mainstream Muslims with a slight traditionalist inclination, and thus represent the vast majority of Javanese Muslims quite accurately. They have both published numerous sermon cassettes, and draw huge crowds whenever they are delivering their sermons. Due to the temporary Islamization of Indonesian society during Ramadan, they are at their busiest during the month of fasting, when TV-stations, radio-broadcasters, politicians, and noodle companies all compete to attract the popular 'preachers' to their specific events. During Ramadan 2002 (1423 AH), I bought two of Zainuddin's and two of Gymnastiar's audiocassettes (to the price of Rp. 11,000 or USD 1,30 each) in Yogyakarta, and also recorded two of Zainuddin's TV-sent sermons (all in Indonesian). It is these 'texts' that will be discussed below. Since the four former sermons

[257] See Wensinck 1986. For a thorough discussion of Islamic preaching, see Halldén 2001.

have been professionally recorded, published and distributed, and the two latter are likely to face a similar destiny, they are here regarded and treated as any other (written) publication. What is presented below is thus not an ethnographic study of Islamic preaching, but rather a study of oral recorded literature.[258]

KH ZAINUDDIN MZ: HUMOROUS RHETORIC

KH Zainuddin MZ is an extremely popular Indonesian *khatib*, and he has been so for some time. He is, however, generally referred to not as *khatib* but as *da'i* (I., A. *dāᶜin*, one who invites [to Islam]), and when someone says *da'i berjuta umat* (I., the *da'i* with a million followers) in Indonesia, everybody knows who is talked about. *Dāᶜin* stems from the Arabic root *d-ᶜ-w*, and is thus linked to the word *daᶜwah* (I. *dakwah*). This is the term used for Islamic proselytizing activities, and Zainuddin is consequently thought of as a Muslim 'missionary.' It should be noted, however, that he only propagates Islam in Muslim surroundings. In other words, he revives Muslims' understanding of Islam—and their attachment to it—and is to be regarded as an actor of the Islamic resurgence.[259]

Zainuddin delivers sermons with great success: mosques are always crowded during his sermons, and there is symptomatically a substantial congregation gathering outside the mosque due to limitations of space. During one of his TV-sent Ramadan *khutbah* in 2002/1423, some eager Muslims had arrived to the mosque the day prior to the sermon to ensure their place to sit, whereas a substantial part of the assembly had to follow the *khutbah* via huge TV-screens outside the mosque. (Parallels to a Western rock concert would be tempting to draw.) Zainuddin's Ramadan-sermons are held in alternate large mosques throughout Indonesia, and broadcast live via national-TV once a week (at prime time, 9 p.m., when the supererogatory prayers are completed and people probably have returned to their homes) during the month of fasting. I suspect that the purchased audiocassettes discussed below are recordings of these sermons during Ramadan 1999, 2000, or 2001.[260]

The first audiocassette is simply entitled *Ramadhan* whereas the other is entitled *Puasa* (I., Fasting). Both of them hold the names of *PT Virgo Ramayana Record* and *Cipta Indah Record*, which are thus probably the

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[258] Cf. Halldén 2001: 27.

[259] As far as I know, Zainuddin has not yet published any written material. Some of his sermons have, however, made it to the bookshelves. See Zainuddin n.d.*a*, Zainuddin n.d.*b*, and Hadi n.d.

[260] In these sermons it becomes clear that they are held during nighttime in the month of Ramadan, and it is apparent that there is a large audience present. It is thus motivated to believe that they are recordings of the TV-sent Ramadan-sermons. What speaks against this, however, is the fact that Zainuddin makes no hint to the specific TV-station that broadcast the sermons, which he does quite explicitly in the sermons I recorded 'live' (via TV) in 2002. The dating of the cassettes is based on political references in the sermons.

publishers, and both of them also host pictures of Zainuddin, wearing—as always—his characteristic *peci* (I., fez-like cap). The cassettes themselves are strangely enough both of the type that are used for Koran recitations, and thus hold the text *al-qurʾānu l-karīm* (in Arabic), whereas any notion of actual content is missing. The sermons of *Ramadhan* and *Puasa* are approximately 59 and 35 minutes long respectively, and the *Puasa* cassette also hosts an Islamic song that plays for about 15 minutes. The sermons I recorded via TV are entitled *Kembali ke Ukhuwah* (I., Return to Muslim Fraternity) and *Kembali ke Akidah Tauhid* (I., Return to the Belief in the Unity of God), and were delivered in Makassar and Cilegon respectively. The length of the TV-show is one hour, but frequent commercials and lengthy introductions substantially reduce the time of the actual sermon.

Zainuddin's sermons bear resemblance to the *khutbah Jum'at* in that they always begin with some standard Arabic phrases (including initial greetings, prayers of blessings upon the prophet, and the *ammā baᶜd*),[261] and end with more of these phrases and a supplication (I. *doa*). Although the sermons could be said to be divided into two parts, there is no clear distinction between the two in the form of the 'preacher' taking a seat for a while (A. *al-faṣlu bayna l-khuṭbatayn*) in any of them, which a Friday service necessitates.

Ramadhan

In *Ramadhan*, Zainuddin proposes three principal functions (I. *fungsi utama*) of the month of fasting. The first of these is Ramadan in the function of a month of hardship for the faith (I. *bulan penempaan iman*), and we are initially reminded that

> The verse that command us to fast begins with the words *yā ayuhālladhīna āmanū,* 'O, you who have attained to the faith.'[262] It is our faith that is called upon in performing this ritual. The most precious diamond, the most valuable pearl, is nothing else than the values of faith. All through Ramadan, this month of hardships for the faith. Let's see: from the beginning, Allah reminds us: *aḥasibu n-nās an yutrakū an yaqūlū āmannā wahum lā yuftanūn*. 'Do men think that on their [mere] saying, 'We have attained to faith,' they will be left to themselves, and will not be put to a test?'[263] [264]

[261] For a short discussion of the term *ammā baᶜd*, see Halldén 2001: 111.
[262] QS 2:183. As throughout this work, Koranic quotes are from Asad (1980).
[263] QS 29:2.
[264] *Ayat yang memerintahkan kita berpuasa, dimulai dengan kata* yā ayuhālladhīna āmanū, '*Hai orang-orang yang beriman.*' *Imanlah yang dipanggil untuk melaksanakan ibadah ini. Intan paling mahal, mutiara paling berharga, tidak lain adalah nilai-nilai iman. Sepanjang Ramadhan, bulan penempaan nilai-nilai keimanan. Mari kita lihat: sejak awal Allah sudah mengingatkan,* aḥasibu n-nās an yutrakū an yaqūlū āmannā wahum lā yuftanūn. '*Adakah manusia menyangka, mereka akan dibiarkan saja mengatakan kami iman pada Allah padahal mereka belum diuji lebih dahulu?*'

The believers will always be put to trial (I. *diuji*) by God, and the higher the quality of the faith, the harder the trials. This latter point is highlighted by the divine hardships sent to the apostles and the prophets, who nevertheless continued their struggles and appointments; indeed, not one single prophet has asked God for retirement. Patience (I. *sabar*) and restraint (I. *mengendalikan diri*) are presented as true and necessary virtues in facing the trials and hardships presented to the believers. These hardships for the faith include, amongst other things, that people who are ordered to care for the seas become pirates, and that those who are supposed to take care of the law, give the law knife-like characteristics: "sharp downwards and blunt upwards."[265] Zainuddin thus encourages his
audience to be strong in its faith, since "we live for our faith, we strive for our faith, and with faith we want to face Allah, the Exalted."[266]

The second function of Ramadan is that of fortifying the roots of togetherness (I. *mengokohkan akar kebersamaan*), and it is interesting here that Zainuddin refers exclusively to the Indonesian nation, and nowhere hints at the larger Muslim community. Muslims are essentially equal, he says, and continues:

> From here [the realization that there are no 'VIP Muslims'] we begin the democratization of the Muslim community. When we performed the night ritual prayer and the supererogatory ritual prayers earlier tonight, we all faced the same direction, we all worshipped Allah, the same God, we all followed the ways of the same prophet, we all did the same moves, and we all read the same readings with the same language. Such are we, our nation. [But] now in Indonesia, it is as if we have begun to perform ritual worship using our own regional languages respectively—the mosques have become noisy, and the angels are confused! [...] Ramadan is the time to straighten out the lines, to close the ranks, and to guard over our unity.[267]

Zainuddin continues by spreading some socio-political criticism around him, and underlines the lack of equality and togetherness that characterize the Indonesian community. The Indonesian people is tired of being fooled around by its leaders, he says, and draws attention to the fact that the hopes and expectations of ordinary Indonesians only are addressed by politicians in their speeches. He also points at the dangers of this in the long run, and hints at a similar development in Indonesia as in the former Soviet Union, i.e. disintegration and balkanization. The late (I. *almarhum*) Soviet Union—as he says to his audience's laughter—can now only dream about returning to its

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[265] *Tajam ke bawah, tumpul ke atas.*

[266] *...karena untuk iman kita hidup, untuk iman kita berjuang, dan dalam iman kita ingin kembali menghadap Allah, subhanahu wa ta'ala.*

[267] *Dari sini kita mulai demokratisasi umat. Di sini tadi ketika isya dan tarawih, kita menghadap ke arah yang sama, menyembah Allah, Tuhan yang sama, mengikuti cara rasul yang sama, melakukan gerakan yang sama, membaca bacaan yang sama, dengan bahasa yang sama. Itulah kita, bangsa ini! Sekarang di Indonesia ini, kita ibarat sholat sudah mulai pakai bahasa masing-masing—ramai masjid, bingung malaikat!* [...] *Ramadhan saatnya meluruskan sof, merapatkan barisan, menjaga keutuhan.*

past heyday, and Indonesia may likewise end up as a dwarfish nation (I. *bangsa yang kerdil*). He then concludes this part of the discussion with two traditions of the prophet: in the first Muhammad is quoted as saying that whoever eases the burden of his fellow will have his own burden eased by Allah on the Day of Resurrection, and in the second as having emphasized the importance of togetherness and harmony.

The last function of Ramadan, as proposed by Zainuddin in this sermon, is that of a month for increasing our worship (I. *meningkatkan ibadah*). There is no guarantee that we will meet Ramadan again next year, and we must therefore use this moment as wisely as possible. But what Zainuddin has in mind is not just an increase in the number of visits to our local mosque:

> Ramadan is a month for increasing our worship, in the widest of senses. The piety of worship can be transformed into social piety. [...] We thank God we are given this possibility [to fast in Ramadan], and we have to use it in order to increase our worship—both our direct worship of Allah, and the worship channeled through our social life.[268]

Ramadan is thus not just a month for expanding and increasing direct worship of God in the form of fasting, ritual worship, and supplications, but also in the form of sympathizing with fellow Muslims. Such social piety will attract its award too—an idea similar to the ones we encountered in connection with the Ramadanic articles above. Zainuddin encourages his listeners to stop postponing any act of worship, since the coming of death constitutes one of Allah's secrets (I. *rahasia Allah*), and since we are not guaranteed to follow the *sunnah* of the prophet in this case, i.e. to live for 63 years. Thus, Zainuddin says citing al-Ghazālī, "renew your ship constantly, because the sea is very deep" (I. *perbarui selalu kapalmu, karena lautan sangat dalam*). If our ship (faith) is weak, we cannot face the trials and hardships of life, and will easily drown. And that is what is about to happen with the ship called Indonesia, which has begun to leak due to "corruption, collusion, nepotism, immorality, indecency, and even lately [due to] the spreading of gambling and narcotics."[269] Drawing upon al-Ghazālī again, the audience is then encouraged to adjust the amount of supplies with the length of the trip, while traveling with this imaginary ship. The longer the trip, the more supplies are needed, and as the trip to the Other Side might be rather lengthy, we must make wise use of Ramadan and supply ourselves well and sufficiently. Well equipped, the waiting in the grave for the Day of Resurrection will feel very

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[268] *Ramadhan adalah bulan untuk meningkatkan ibadah, dalam pengertian yang seluas-luasnya. Kesolehan ibadah yang ditransfer menjadi kesolehan sosial.* [...] *Kita bersyukur diberikan kesempatan, dan itu harus kita manfaatkan untuk meningkatkan ibadah—baik yang langsung kepada Allah, maupun yang tersalur melalui kehidupan sosial kemasyarakatan.*

[269] *...korupsi, kolusi, nepotisme, maksiat, mungkarat, apalagi belakangan ini merebak judi dan narkoba.*

short, Zainuddin says and cites the Koran in support of this.[270] Moreover, on that very day, it will become clear who will have their "terminal" in hell and who will have their in heaven.[271]

After elaborating on these three principal functions of Ramadan, Zainuddin closes his sermon with a supplication, which Indonesian part in translation reads:

> O Allah, full of awe and with hope, and in our full lowness and weakness, we turn to You. Connect our hearts, the nation of Indonesia, [and] unite our steps in our efforts of organizing a brighter future. Grant us [political] leaders that are afraid of You, and who love us [the people]. Give them inner and outer strength so they can bring us, the people and nation of Indonesia, out from this large difficulty [the economical, political, and social crisis] aiming at a society that is just in its prosperity, and prosperous in its justness, all in the shelter of Your blessings. O Allah, save us from dissension, save us from conflicts, save us from the dangers of indecency and immorality.[272]

Interestingly, this supplication is exclusively occupied with the political future of the Indonesian nation, and there is no visible connection to the holy month of fasting.

Puasa

In Zainuddin's second sermon to be considered here, that of *Puasa*, the *dai* begins by saying that Ramadan is a school (I. *madrasah*), in which we can learn much about life. The curriculum of Ramadan is threefold: firstly, by fasting the Muslim community is taught to become patient, tough, and enduring (I. *sabar, ulet, dan tahan uji*); secondly, it evokes an attitude of consistence (I. *melaharikan sikap istiqomah*); and finally, it develops our sense of sincerity (I. *ikhlas*). As for the first of these, the Indonesian nation only needs to be itself, since history—by way of 350 years of colonization, communist uprisings, and Soeharto's dictatorship—has taught Indonesians the virtues of patience. Elaborating further on this, Zainuddin says that patient people can control themselves (I. *mengendalikan diri*), in that their reason (I. *akal*) de-

[270] QS 18:19.

[271] Zainuddin cites part of QS 42:7: *farīqun fiʾl-jannah, wa farīqun fī s-saʿīr*, and freely translates it as "there are those whose terminal is heaven, and those whose is hell" (I. *Ada yang terminalnya surga, dan ada yang terminalnya di neraka*).

[272] *Ya Allah, dengan sepenuh perasaan dan pengharapan, dengan segala kerendahan dan kelemahan, kami bermohon ke hadiratMu. Tautkan hati kami, bangsa Indonesia, satukan langkah kami untuk menata hari esok yang lebih baik, karuniakan kita pemimpin-pemimpin yang takut kepadaMu, dan sayang kepada kami. Berikan mereka kekuatan lahir dan batin, untuk membawa kita rakyat dan bangsa Indonesia keluar dari kesulitan besar ini, menuju masyarakat yang adil dalam kemakmuran, dan makmur dalam keadilan, di bawah naungan ridlaMu. Ya Allah, selamatkan kami dari perpecahan, selamatkan kami dari pertikaian, selamatkan kami dari bahaya kemunkaran dan kezaliman.*

feats their passion (I. *nafsu*). As such, the position of humans is higher than that of the angels.[273]

The second lesson given in the school of Ramadan is exemplified by a story. Zainuddin tells of three Muslim soldiers detained by infidels (I. *orang-orang kafir*) in a war won by the latter. Instead of executing them immediately, the infidel king decides to provide them with the opportunity of renouncing their Muslim past and begin following their new master's ways, for which they are to be given adequate repayment and promising careers in the government. The Muslim soldiers are consequently called upon one by one by the prime minister, and presented with the king's offer. The first officer decidedly refuses by saying:

> Do you really think that I so far have been fighting just in order to get an eminent position? O, no. Do you think I have been fighting in search for loads of money, or for having my future's well-being guaranteed? No, prime minister. I left my family, my hometown, my relatives, my friends, in order to struggle in the way of Allah (I. *jihad*), hoping for His, the Exalted's, blessings.[274]

And by dying in the hands of God, the soldier expresses his certainty that his sins will be forgiven and that he will be provided with at ticket to His blessings (thus becoming a *syahid,* I., martyr, A. *shahīd*), at which Zainuddin's audience fervently applauses. When his head finally is chopped off by the prime minister, his lips keep reciting the following Koranic verse:

> [But unto the righteous God will say,] "O thou human being that hast attained to in ner peace!
> Return thou unto thy Sustainer, well-pleased [and] pleasing [Him]:
> enter, then, together with My [other true] servants –
> yea, enter thou My paradise!"[275]

The second Muslim soldier gives a similar answer to the prime minister's proposal, and says he cannot wait to follow his brother who just has been received by the fairies (I. *bidadari*) in heaven. Consequently, his head too is chopped off, whereupon his lips recited as follows:

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[273] Zainuddin compares humans with angels and animals. The angels are only given reason and are thus essentially good and virtuous: Jibril did not corrupt a single verse in the Koran, and the angel of death (I. *malaikalmaut*) never errs in taking away a human life. Animals, on the other hand, were given brains, but no reason, and are consequently governed by their passion: overcome by lust, cocks and hens do not search for privacy, and no one really bothers if a horse walks around without pants. Humans, finally, are endowed with both reason and passion, and thus stand higher than angels when the former wins, and lower than animals when the latter does so. Cf. the discussion of the Ramadanic articles above.

[274] *Apa Anda menyangka selama ini saya berjuang karena* kepengen (J.) *kedudukan yang tinggi? Neih. Tuan menyangka saya berjuang karena* kepengen *harta yang banyak, jaminan hari depan yang memadai? Tidak, tuan perdana menteri. Saya tinggalkan keluarga, kampung halaman, sanak-famili, hadai-taulan, saya jihad karena mengharap ridla Allah, subhanahu wa ta'ala.*

[275] QS 89:27-30.

> Some faces will on that Day be bright with happiness,
> looking up to their Sustainer.[276]

The third officer, however, becomes attracted by the prime minister's proposal, and says he is ready to leave Islam if his life will be spared. But the king is little impressed by this, and fears that the officer will betray his new master at first chance—after all, he has already shown himself able of betraying his own kinsfolk and co-religionists. Taking this into consideration, the king orders the last Muslim's execution too. Upon hearing this the officer wants to return to the Muslim faith again, but the confession of faith gets stuck in his throat, and he is unable to pronounce it. Then, his head rolls too, while reciting:

> ...could one on whom [God's] sentence of suffering has been passed [be rescued by man]? Couldst thou, perchance, save one who is [already, as it were,] in the fire? [277]

Zainuddin's second Ramadanic lesson thus teaches the need for consistency in order not to get easily seduced by immorality, should it show up. He criticizes those (politicians) who demand the eradication of corruption from below, but then present another attitude to the practice once they are in positions that enable it: "When being at the bottom they diligently recite the throne verse, but once they get their throne they forget all about the verses."[278]

The third lesson concerns sincerity (I. *ikhlas*), which is the soul (I. *roh*) of our deeds (I. *amal*). Sincerity must permeate all our deeds, and especially that of the performance of the Ramadanic fast, due to this latter's status as *ibadah sirriyah* (I., secret worship, from A. *ʿibādat sirrīyah*). In short, there is no use in engaging in worship—in any one form—unless it is securely based on sincerity. Upon stating this, Zainuddin concludes his sermon with a supplication similar to that reproduced above.

Kembali ke Ukhuwah

In *Kembali ke Ukhuwah* (I., Return to Muslim Fraternity), Zainuddin initially notes that it is with great concern the Indonesian Muslim community enters Ramadan in 2002/1423. Not only does the country still linger on in the darkness of the social-, political-, and economical crisis commenced in 1997, it was also given a present (I. *hadiah*) in the form of a fatal bomb in Bali some time ago. After making clear that the Indonesian nation on no premises ap-

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[276] QS 75:22-23.
[277] QS 39:19.
[278] *Waktu di bawah rajin baca Ayat Kursi, dapat kursi lupa sama ayat.* The 'throne verse' is a popular designation of QS 2:255.

prove of terrorism, and that no religion whatsoever can be identified with it, Zainuddin also makes clear—to the applause of his audience—that terror is a product of the powerful nations' (I. *negara-negara yang berkuasa*) policies of injustice (I. *ketidakadilan*) towards their minor equivalents. And just as the prophet once launched a successful war at Badar in the month of Ramadan,[279] so too must the Indonesian Muslim community proclaim war at the end of 2002. This war, Zainuddin continues, should have a threefold target: stupidity (I. *kebodohan*), poverty (I. *kemiskinan*), and the combination of indecency, falsity, and immorality (I. *mungkarat, kebatilan, dan maksiat*).

With the target of stupidity Zainuddin does not refer to the problems of educational issues in Indonesia—as one might be inclined to think—, but rather at the (stupidity of the) political leaders of the country:

> We are a sovereign nation, [and] we do not want to be fooled around by others. Leaders of our country: do not dance at the drum-beating of someone else! [applause] The sovereignty and independence of our country differs from that of our neighboring countries. This sovereignty and independence did not fell down as a gift from the sky, as does the dew at night. Our independence and sovereignty was redeemed by the sweat, tears, blood, and souls of our parents. Do not pawn this, in hoping for foreign help [applause].[280]

The second target of the proposed Ramadanic war—that of poverty—is only briefly mentioned in Zainuddin's sermon, and he repeats what one often hears in a variety of contexts in Indonesia, namely that the country constitutes one of the richest countries in the world, whereas at the same time its inhabitants remain poor. The wealth, affluence, and assets of Indonesia have not been managed in the interest of the Indonesian people, he says, and the revenues of the country's oil, gas, fish, timber, etc. have not made it to their pockets.

In discussing his final target, Zainuddin takes a clear stance against what he perceives to be immorality and indecency, and illustrates it with an imaginary dialogue embedded with some general statements:

> ...the Muslim community cannot tolerate gambling, drinking, prostitution, and corruption... [...]
> -"Hey, let me be, it's *me* who gamble, with *my* money, in *my* house."
> -"Okay, it's *you* who gamble, *you* who drink, *you* who seek out prostitutes, but those are all acts of immorality! And if this country hosts too much immorality, Allah will become infuriated and send us earthquakes. And then it's not only you who's stricken by misfortune—all of the ship's passengers will drown!" [applause]

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[279] Zainuddin cites part of QS 2:249.

[280] *Kita bangsa yang berdaulat, jangan mau dibodohi oleh orang lain. Para pemimpin negeri kita: jangan menari di atas gendang yang ditabuh oleh orang lain. Kedaulatan dan kemerdekaan negeri kita berbeda dengan negeri-negeri tetangga kita. Kemerdekaan dan kedaulatan ini bukan hadiah, bukan turun dari langit seperti turunnya embun di waktu malam. Kemerdekaan dan kedaulatan negeri ini ditebus dengan keringat, air mata, darah, dan nyawa orang-orang tua kita. Jangan digadaikan cuma karena mengharapkan bantuan orang lain.*

> So every Muslim has to stand up, enjoying what is lawful and forbidding what is wrong.[281]

And with that, says Zainuddin, we have arrived at the sermon's essence, namely that of the importance of togetherness (I. *kebersamaan*)—which is a returning topic in his lessons. We may very well differ and exhibit diversity, but we must not interpret this as enmity, since "diversity is a blessing, and pluralism is beautiful."[282] He then continues by quoting a famous commander of the Indonesian forces—general Sudirman—as having said that there can be no victory unless there is strength, and no strength unless there is unity. Therefore, the success of the Ramadanic war is dependent on the willingness of the Indonesian people to guard over its inner togetherness and integrity (I. *kebersamaan dan keutuhan*). Essentially—Zainuddin concludes before closing with his usual supplication—it is as with splintered palm leaf ribs (I. *lidi*): however large one of these may be, it will never be able to kill a small fly. If several small ones are bound together, on the other hand, the broom it then constitutes will be able to extrude even a dog.

Kembali ke Akidah Tauhid

Not surprisingly, the theme of togetherness is touched upon in *Kembali ke Akidah Tauhid* (I., Return to the Belief in Unity of God) too, although this sermon begins by stating that we are living in times of hardship, and that the trials we experience are God's tests (I. *ujian*).[283] The divine difficulties differ in nature, however, depending on who they are sent to:

> If a good man is struck by difficulties, it's called a test. If a partly good man is struck by difficulties, it's called an admonition. If a bad man is struck by difficulties, it's to be called a prepayment. [laughter][284]

A partly good man is defined as anyone who is diligent in performing his ritual prayer while at the same time being keen in engaging in immoralities, or as someone who pays large sums of alms to help his fellow Muslims but is even more industrious in corrupt business. Now, are the difficulties Indonesia

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[281] *...umat Islam tidak bisa mentolerir judi, mabuk, pelacuran, korupsi...* [...] *"Biar sajalah, yang judi* kan *saya, dengan uang saya, mainnya di rumah saya." "Oke, yang judi kau, yang mabuk kau, yang melacur kau. Tapi judi, mabuk, pelacuran, maksiat, mas. Kalau negeri ini banyak maksiatnya, Allah murka, turun gempa bumi. Yang celaka bukan cuma kamu—seluruh penumpang kapal ikut tenggelam di dalamnya." Maka setiap pribadi Muslim harus tegak, melaksanakan yang makruf dan mencegah yang mungkar.*

[282] *Kebhinekaan adalah rahmah, kemajemukan adalah indah.*

[283] Zainuddin cites QS 2:155, "And most certainly shall We try you by means of danger, and hunger, and loss of worldly goods, of lives and of [labour's] fruits."

[284] *Kalau kesulitan menimpa orang baik-baik, itu namanya ujian. Kalau kesulitan menimpa orang setengah baik, itu namanya teguran. Kalau kesulitan menimpa orang jahat, itu namanya persekot.*

is facing tests or admonitions, or perhaps even a prepayment? For Zainuddin the state of affairs is clear: for the Indonesian people (I. *rakyat*) this is a test, whereas for the leaders (I. *pemimpin*) it is nothing but an admonition. The people is thus encouraged to be patient (I. *sabar*), and the leaders to engage in self-introspection (I. *introspeksi diri*), while "improving what is incomplete, and decreasing what is excessive."[285] Since political leaders are to be servants of the community (I. *pelayan bagi umat*), we (the ordinary people) need not care about the restoration of the economy or the availability of employment opportunities—these are matter for our leaders. What we need to do, on the other hand, is to straighten out our religious beliefs (I. *meluruskan akidah*).

And this we can do by looking at two of Islam's missions, Zainuddin suggests. The first mission of Islam was to free people from the shackles of polytheism (I. *belenggu kemusyrikan*), and the point here is to put faith in nothing but God:

> If I am convinced there is no god but Allah, I will not ask for help except from Allah. I will not be afraid for anyone, except for Allah. I will not be dependent on anything, except on Allah. I will not ask for my livelihood from anyone, except from Allah. I will not take my troubles to anyone, except to Allah. If we are consistent with this conviction, the old soothsayer will have nowhere to go [laughter, applause].[286]

After liberating humankind from the shackles of polytheism, Islam also liberated its recipients from racial discrimination (I. *ras diskriminasi*), which constitutes the second mission of Islam. That all men are created equal is thus an old Islamic principle, which was adhered to by the Muslim community long before America began proclaiming it. This principle's relevance for the contemporaneous Indonesian society is to be found in its stress laid on harmonious relations (I. *kerukunan*)—both within the Islamic community, towards other religious communities, and between the Muslim community and the government.[287] As for the first of these, we must realize that all Muslims share some common goals and convictions, and that minor differences must not be magnified. As for the relations with other religious communities, Zainuddin reminds us that Islam is a "mercy for the [whole] universe" (I. *rahmatan lil'alamin*),[288]—not only for the Muslim part of it.

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[285] *Perbaiki yang kurang, dan kurangi yang memang berlebihan.*

[286] *Kalau saya yakin tidak ada tuhan selain Allah, saya tidak akan minta tolong kecuali hanya kepada Allah. Saya tidak akan pernah takut, kecuali hanya kepada Allah. Saya tidak akan menggantungkan hidup, kecuali hanya kepada Allah. Saya tidak akan minta rizki, kecuali hanya kepada Allah. Saya tidak akan melarikan persoalan, kecuali hanya kepada Allah. Kalau konsekuen dengan keyakinan ini,* embah (J.) *dukun* nggak (sl.) *dapat tempat.*

[287] *Baik antar-umat seagama, antar-umat beragama, maupun antar umat beragama dengan pemerintah.*

[288] A. *raḥmatan lilᶜālamīn*. See QS 21:107.

> Different religious affiliation is no motivation for antagonism. We've already come to terms with our pluralism, with our diversity, with our variety. [Let there be] harmony between the different religious communities, let's respect each other, let's appreciate each other—of course within the limits of *lakum dīnukum wa lia dīn*.[289]

As for the relationship between the Islamic community and the government, Zainuddin says that the people are obliged to follow their leader as long as he leads them correctly, and illustrates his case with a parallel to ritual worship. The members of the congregation follow the *imam* as long as he prays correctly, but should he commit an error, they have to admonish him. Foremost, this should be done by Muslims in the first line (I. *sof*) of prayer, who in political life equals members of the parliament (I. *anggota DPR*).

> At one occasion the *imam* breaks the wind [which nullifies his ritual purity needed for performing prayer]. Well, we're all humans; we occasionally do break the wind, right? But then there's a member of the congregation who says: "In the spirit of the loyalty I show the *imam*, if he breaks the wind, I'll break it even louder!" [laughter] That is blind fanaticism, [that is] folly loyalty. [...] The important thing is that the *imam* is conscious of his faults, and that he upon breaking the wind, leaves. [applause] Such is the disorder of our congregational prayer nowadays, the disorder of our country: loads of *imam* have broken the wind, but they are too prestigious to leave the stage.[290]

This fierce socio-political criticism needs hardly any comments. Instead I below reproduce the sermon's final supplication, due to its relevance for the month of fasting.

> O God, as far as our abilities allow us, we have carried out Your orders in the month of Ramadan. We have been fasting, we have forsaken eating although the food around us have been plentiful, we have suffered thirst although the drinks around us have been plentiful—only to fulfill Your orders, o God. So, please accept our worship.[291]

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[289] *Perbedaan agama bukan alasan untuk saling bermusuhan. Apalagi kita sudah menyadari tentang kemajemukan kita, tentang kebhinekaan kita, tentang keragaman kita. Rukun antar umat beragama—saling menghormati, saling menghargai, teapi tetap dalam batas* lakum dīnukum wa lia dīn. This last part is a Koranic quote (QS 109:6) which Zainuddin leaves untranslated. In English translation it reads. "Unto you, your moral law, and unto me, mine!" Asad choose to render the Arabic *dīn* as 'moral law'; it should be added that it is more commonly translated as 'religion.'

[290] *Satu saat imam buang angin. Namanya manusia bisa buang angin, toh? Ada makmum lalu berkata: "Demi kesetiaan saya kepada imam, imam buang angin, saya lebih keras lagi. Itu namanya fanatisme buta, loyalitas yang goblok.* [...] *Yang penting imam tahu diri, buang angin, minggir. Ini kacaunya sholat berjama'ah kita sekarang, kacaunya negeri kita sekarang, banyak imam sudah buang angin—gengsi!*

[291] *Ya Allah, semampu yang kami lakukan telah kami laksanakan perintahMu di bulan Ramadhan ini. Kami berpuasa, kami tinggalkan makan padahal di sekitar banyak makanan, kami menderita haus padahal di sekitar banyak minumam—semata-mata untuk memenuhi perintahMu, ya Allah. Maka terimalah ibadah kami ini.*

In summing up Zainuddin's four sermons, we may discern some general features which all contribute to the popularity of them. The first of these is the socio-political criticism Zainuddin has come to represent. In a country where criticism of this kind only has been possible for a handful of years, it is quite tickling to hear someone openly denounce public political figures and their activities. Zainuddin himself managed for quite some time to stay aloof of real party politics—and often stated his intent to do just that during that period—only to become instrumental in the formation of the political party PPP Reformasi (I. *Partai Persatuan Pembangunan Reformasi*, The United Development Party for Reformation, an offspring from the regular PPP) and also its chairman in early 2002. Despite this new occupation, Zainuddin keeps delivering sermons, apparently almost as often as before, and he states himself that he manages to keep the two interests apart.[292] This latter statement is, however, rather dubious, and we have repeatedly seen that his sermons in fact frequently are punctuated by more or less severe socio-political criticism.

The second general feature proposed here concerns the sermons' style: they are humorous and rhetorically effective. A Friday sermon (which is the most common Islamic sermon) in a regular mosque in Java is rarely neither funny nor rhetorically enlightening—though they may be informative and interesting—, and as such Zainuddin's *khutbah* stand out. Whenever he is delivering a sermon, mosques are sure to rumble by laughter and fervent applause, which thus replace the not uncommon snoring and whispering.

The third feature concerns Zainuddin's preoccupation with Indonesian nationalism and his siding with the common people. The unity of the Indonesian nation is for many Indonesians extremely important—partly due to the legendary status of one of the republic's founding fathers, Soekarno, and partly to the ardent nationalist propaganda of the Soeharto regime—, but at the same time, numerous loud and powerful voices raised in post-New Order Indonesia call for regional independence from the nation-state. Zainuddin is an untiring proponent of the unity of the republic, and attracts much support and applause for this conviction. In line with this he also attracts much popularity by siding with the common people; he always positions himself as one of the low-class commoners (I. *rakyat kecil*)—who probably are in majority among his listeners—and apparently succeeds in oppressing or hiding the fact that he actually belongs to a quite different social class.

The fourth and final of the proposed general features of Zainuddin's sermons is directly concerned with the month of fasting. In analyzing his Ramadanic sermons, one is struck about how little is actually said about what could be called 'normative fasting'—in the sense of rules and regulations—and how much energy is spent upon discussing topics which only peripher-

[292] *Tokoh Indonesia* (no date) a.

ally touch upon Ramadan proper. One also notices an emphasis on questions concerning the human character Ramadan presupposes, and that which it gives birth to.

KH ABDULLAH GYMNASTIAR: HEART MANAGEMENT

KH Abdullah Gymnastiar, more commonly referred to as Aa Gym, is also a surpassingly popular Indonesian *khatib*. He has been the *kyai* of the Daarut Tauhid *pesantren* in Bandung, West Java, since 1990, but it was only ten years later that he began to attract extensive attention, and he is at the time of writing (mid-2003) the single most popular Islamic 'preacher' in Indonesia. During Ramadan 2002/1423 he was extremely busy and often appeared in various national TV channels several times per day—one source had it that his secretaries have to sift through some 1,200 invitations to offer a sermon every (non-Ramadanic) month.[293]

Similarly to the case of Zainuddin, mosques are packed to their limits whenever Aa Gym is scheduled to give a *khutbah*. They are generally not, however, up for witnessing rumbling laughter, but rather emotional weeping; for some reason—which for me is ungraspable—Gymnastiar's sermons are frequently able to move people, including the preacher himself, to tears. Such is the heart management (I. *manajemen qalbu*) that Aa Gym offers, a key idea of his that he describes as "a concept that offers itself to invite people to learning to understand their hearts, their innermost, in order to become willing and capable of controlling themselves after understanding who they actually are."[294]

The two audiocassettes to be discussed here are entitled *Kepompong Ramadhan* (I., The Cocoon of Ramadan) and *Menyingkap Rahasia Ramadhan* (I., Unveiling the Secrets of Ramadan), both of which are distributed (and produced, I suppose) by Gymnastiar's own *PT Mutiara Qolbun Saliim* and were released in 2001 and 2002 respectively. The first of these is approximately 34 minutes in length (and also hosts a poetry reading—not discussed here—of some 11 minutes), and gives the impression, with its exaggerated echo, that it has been recorded in an (almost) empty mosque. More probable is, however, that it was recorded in a studio, though there are sporadic signs of a small live audience on the cassette. The front cover of *Kepompong Ramadhan* hosts a picture of Gymnastiar in his characteristic—and by Indonesian standards unusual—turban, accompanied by a butterfly and some flowers. On the back side of it there is a short extract from the sermon itself.

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[293] Elegant & Tedjasukmana 2002.

[294] *Tokoh Indonesia* (no date) b. *"...sebuah konsep yang menawarkan diri untuk mengajak orang memahami hati atau qalbu, diri sendiri, agar mau dan mampu mengendalikan diri setelah memahami benar siapa dirinya sendiri."*

In *Menyingkap Rahasia Ramadhan* Aa Gym offers an almost one hour long sermon (which is crowned by a short song sung in Arabic and Indonesian), and the *khatib* is here apparently in the presence of an audience, as occasional laughter and crying babies seem to suggest. On the front cover, we find a picture of Aa Gym in his turban looking out over the plains, whereas the back cover again gives room to a short extract of the sermon.

In what follows, I will give an account of these two sermons—which like Zainuddin's share some common characteristics with the Friday sermon, but yet are something distinctively different—and discuss them briefly.

Kepompong Ramadhan

The sermon *Kepompong Ramadhan* was incipiently delivered at the eve of the first of Ramadan, shortly after the ritual evening prayer (I. *maghrib*), as becomes clear at the beginning of the cassette. Gymnastiar initially states that anyone who is familiar with the eminence of the holy month should be immeasurably excited (I. *tidak terkirakan gembira*) by this time, since

> ...Allah, the Greatest, the of all states and our limitations All-Knowing, promises that He will provide extensively for His believing servants in the month of Ramadan. [...] ...and it is promised to everyone who carries out the month of fasting to the limits of his abilities that he will be saved in this world and the Other. Imagine, just after the evening call to prayer we just heard, the rewards of our *sunnah* deeds will be as if they were obligatory. [...] [And] our obligatory deeds will receive rewards hundreds of times larger than is usual.[295]

To these reasons—which have *ḥadīthic* support—are then added clarifying explanations: to read just one Koranic verse in the month of Ramadan will be rewarded analogously to having recited the whole Koran (I. *khatam*) in one of the other eleven months, whereas the sin which may have arisen if our *maghrib* prayers have been omitted or only inadequately performed a hundred times has the chance to be erased by just one correctly performed *maghrib* prayer in the month of fasting. Ramadan, Gymnastiar goes on, is a time for personal self-improvement (I. *memperbaiki mutu diri kita*), a month in which we are supposed to beautify our personalities (I. *memperindah kepribadian*), and this is where the idea of a cocoon emerges. 'Entering' a cocoon is a disgusting caterpillar, which after a bit of processing 'comes out' as a lovely butterfly. Similarly, Muslims enter Ramadan in a state of defilement after eleven months of non-Ramadanic activities, and are provided with the possibility to reemerge as beautified human beings after one full month of

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[295] *...Allah Yang Maha Agung, Yang Maha Tahu segala keadaan, keterbatasan diri kita, menjanikan akan menjamu hamba-hamba yang beriman di bulan Ramadhan ini.* [...] *...dijanjikan siapapun yang melewati Ramadhan ini dengan sebaik-baiknya dijamin dia akan menjadi orang yang diselamatkan dunia dan akherat. Bayangkan seusai adhan maghrib barusan, semua amalan sunat yang dilakukan diganti ganjarannya seakan-akan menjadi ganjaran wajib.* [...] *Semua amalan wajib dilipatgandakan beratus kali lipat.*

devotional and pious activities. So it would be quite dumb and a great loss just to let Ramadan pass by without notice, he states.

Though Abdullah Gymnastiar's sermons not are as lucidly presented as we saw Zainuddin's were above, one may discern three major themes in *Kepompong Ramadhan.* The first of these is the need for sound management of our time (I. *manajemen waktu*), and Aa Gym spends large amounts of energy in describing the value of time. For Muslims, he says, time is not only money, but rather respectability and ranking by Allah's side (I. *kehormatan dan kedudukan di sisi Allah*), and as such we are wise to make as smart use of every second as is possible.

> We cannot be willing to let time just pass by. It has to become something. Right? Just to sit silent, to move around, to think, to speak, to listen—it has to go through a sound process of thinking. [...] Just to sit around, what do we want with that? It's better to perform *zikir*. Tired? Thank God you're tired, we're not robots.[296]

The second theme discerned here is that of increasing our worship (I. *ibadah*) in the month of Ramadan. If we cannot increase the quantity of our worship, he says, we should at least aggrandize the quality of it, and he makes constant and special reference to ritual prayer (I. *sholat*). In a 'Zainuddian' tone he refers to Ramadan as a month for "increasing the quality of our ritual prayer" (I. *peningkatan mutu sholat kita*), and seems to suggest that virtually all problems may and will vanish if *sholat* is correctly and consequently performed. The nightly prayers (I. *qiyamul lail*, A. *qiyāmu l-layl*) are paid special attention, and it is stressed that it is the fact that they are tiring to perform that enables them to draw us closer to Allah.

The sermon's third and last major theme stresses the importance of constantly giving alms (I. *sedekah*). Since our economical abilities differ, it is not the amount of money that is of significance here, but rather the right intention. Aa Gym also draws attention—rather unconventionally—to the condition that *sedekah* need not be in the form of money; to put a smile on one's lips is characterized as *sedekah*, as is the act of picking up litter from the street or avoiding making other people embarrassed or uncomfortable. In other words, cash money is just one part of Islamic *sedekah*. And upon stating this, the sermon is abruptly ended and followed by an emotionally read poem entitled *Cermin Diri* (I., Take a Look in the Mirror).

Menyingkap Rahasia Ramadhan

Just as *Kepompong Ramadhan* did, *Menyingkap Rahasia Ramadhan* too starts off by stating that Ramadan is a spectacular month in which Muslims

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[296] *Kita tidak boleh rela waktu lewat begitu saja. Harus menjadi sesuatu. Betul? Diam, bergerak, berfikir, berbicara, mendengar, harus lewat proses pemikiran yang betul.* [...] *Kita diam, mau apa diam? Lebih baik diam kita pakai berzikir. Letih? Alhamdulillah letih, kita bukan robot.*

are provided extensively for, and that it would be a great loss not to be eager to enter the month of fasting fully prepared. Moreover, Ramadan

> ...makes people who have lost their hopes able to hope again, and those who have lost faith able to rise, and the disabled to flare up in their enthusiasm. Because Allah's promise in the month of Ramadan is very impressive. Just as a dead seed that suddenly is re-fertilized by Allah may breath again, anything that is wilted may become rigid. If you regard this life as full of burdens with only thin hopes, then be knowing of the fact that Allah will not disappoint his servants that are hoping for His blessings in Ramadan. In fact we should shed tears, and be eager to enter Allah's feast...[297]

Aa Gym then goes on to cite (in Indonesian translation) the entire sermon that Muhammad delivered prior to Ramadan; this takes approximately ten minutes and will not be commented upon here. In the remaining part of his sermon, we may again discern three major themes: firstly, to guard over ourselves from anything unlawful (I. *haram*); secondly, to ask for friends' and relatives' forgiveness and to become generous forgivers ourselves; and thirdly, to prepare our Ramadanic accessories. The first theme is favorably captured in a quote:

> ...as from this night on, we must start to guard over ourselves from anything that Allah has deemed unlawful. [...] ...we should start to fast (I. *shaum,* A. *ṣawm*) from everything that does not attract Allah's approval. Allah sees our struggles. [...] O, Holy Allah, from this night on we will not expose our ears for filthy statements, and from this night on we will try to speak as little as needed—why should we add filth to our surrounding by talking nonsense?[298]

In this same line of reasoning, Aa Gym goes on to encourage his listeners to make sure our houses will be blessed in the holy month of Ramadan, and this he suggests should be made by throwing out anything we may find in them that might be unlawful. We are recommended to expel from our houses, things such as clothes, kitchen utensils, and books, should we put the slightest of doubts in Allah's likening of them. Further, if we find that we have too much of something, then we should give it away to those in better need; Al-

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[297] Due to the oral character of the original, this quote has been rather more freely translated than the others: *...membuat orang-orang yang putus harapan bisa berharap, yang putus asa bisa bangkit, yang hampir lumpuh semangatnya bisa berkobar. Karena janji Allah di bulan Ramadhan amat-amat dahsyat. Bagai benih yang telah mati, tiba-tiba oleh Allah dipupuk dengan pupuk sangat, sangat, sangat punya kekuatan, sehingga apapun yang layu bisa tegar kembali. Kalau saudara begitu banyak menghadapi hidup ini berat, seakan-akan tipis harapan, maka Ramadhan adalah saat di mana Allah tidak akan mengecewakan hamba-hambaNya yang berharap dari keberkahan bulan Ramadhan ini. Seharusnya kita bersimbah air mata, merasa sangat ingin memasuki jamuan Allah...*

[298] Again, this quote is rather freely translated: *...kita harus mulai menjaga diri dari apa yang Allah haramkan.* [...] *...kita mulai sawn dari apapun yang tidak disukai Allah. Allah melihat perjuangan kita.* [...] *Maha Suci Allah, malam ini tidak ada pendengaran yang kotor yang boleh kita dengar, malam ini dan seterusnya kita usahakan sehemat mungkin berkata—buat apa kita menambah-nambah kekotoran diri kita dengan berkata-kata yang tiada guna?*

lah will care for us later if needed. The essence of this theme is summed up in the following rhetorically put question: "Would we rather have our homes praised by human beings than by Allah?"[299] and the following invitation: "If you travel by plane in the month of Ramadan, choose a seat by the window if you may do so, because flight attendants are part of the trials of Ramadan."[300] In other words, care only for Allah, and guard over what your eyes see.

The second theme in this sermon is the importance of asking for forgiveness and the readiness to forgive. First and foremost we are encouraged to visit our parents—at their graves should they be deceased—prior to the commencement of Ramadan, and ask for their forgiveness. Spouses too should ask for each other's forgiveness, as should brothers and sisters, employers and employees, teachers and students. And if we are sincere (I. *tulus*) in our request, "God willingly, it will be easier [for us] to face Ramadan, should we be forgiven."[301] To complete Aa Gym's proposed feast of forgiveness (I. *pesta memaafkan*) we must also become sincere forgivers, and we are even encouraged to forgive people who do not ask for it. This pre-Ramadanic feast also has larger implications in that it necessitates frequent visits to friends and relatives, and consequent renewal of bonds of friendship (I. *tali silaturahmi*). As we have mentioned (and will discuss further in the next chapter), this is a practice that finds impressive realization at the time of *Lebaran* in Java, but Aa Gym apparently sees the need for it already in late Syaban.

The last theme is perhaps not really a theme, and indeed only slightly commented upon, but it is still quite interesting for us here. It too concerns pre-Ramadanic activities—more precisely the preparation of Ramadanic accessories:

> My friends, gather together your books now, especially those about the grandeur of Ramadan. Wash your prayer rug, put forth your clothes and your skullcap, so that when you're approaching the house of Allah you do so in the best of appearances.[302]

We are furthermore encouraged to always have some cash for alms at hand, and reminded about the primacy and rewards of providing someone who is fasting with food for the breaking of the fast. Then the sermon is concluded with an extended supplication in Indonesian, in which Aa Gym himself—and probably parts of the audience—bursts into tears. The supplication–too long for reproduction here—is entirely concerned with Ramadanic issues (in a

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[299] *Akankah rumah kita lebih suka dipuji manusia daripada dipuji Allah?*

[300] *Naik pesawat selama Ramadhan, kalau boleh milih, pililah yang dekat jendela karena pramugari termasuk cobaan di bulan Ramadhan.*

[301] *...Insya Allah, kalau dimaafkan lebih ringan menghadapi Ramadhan.*

[302] *Sahabat sekalian, buku-buku kumpulkan, ya? Terutama yang tentang keutamaan-keutamaan Ramadhan, sajadah bersihkan, pakaian siapkan, kopiah supaya kalau kita melangkah ke rumah Allah, kita melangkah dengan penampilan terbaik kita.*

wide sense) and then concluded with Aa Gym asking the audience for forgiveness; one should live as one teaches.

In comparing Abdullah Gymnastiar's two Ramadan sermons with those of Zainuddin, it becomes clear that they share neither the latter's socio-political criticism, his humorous and rhetorical style, nor his concern with the Indonesian nation.[303] However, the two *khatib* present a similar attitude towards Ramadan and towards their own assignments: neither of the two extend dogmatic imperatives concerning 'normative fasting,' but are more inclined to indulge in discussions concerning sought-after human qualities and characteristics that Ramadan presupposes and/or produces. Now, what has Aa Gym that Zainuddin has not? First of all, he has an ability to use his voice in several different ways, all of them emotionally charged. He shouts forcibly, speaks gently, and weeps when needed—and all this in ways that touch the hearts of his listeners. There is thus a strong and effective dramaturgical presence in Gymnastiar's sermons—which Zainuddin lack—, with the voice of the *khatib* as the sole actor. Secondly, although rarely able to produce rumbling laughter, Aa Gym presents joyous sermons that may inspire the most depressed Muslim. He thus introduces Ramadan in both of the sermons discussed above as a great feast in which Allah will care extensively for his subjects, and he speaks repeatedly about the promised rewards fasting Muslims will receive. The listeners are characteristically not presented with any ideas of what might happen if one does not fast, if one does not perform the nightly supererogatory prayers, or if one does not spread alms around oneself—there is simply not room for such negative assessments in Gymnastiar's sermons. Thirdly, Aa Gym focuses largely on the individual Muslims and their closest surroundings, and stresses the need for personal self-improvement. In doing this, the essence of the sermons becomes very concrete and easy to grasp, and the listeners can readily relate to what the preacher says, and also implement his imperatives in their own daily lives.

RAMADANIC MUSIC, POETRY, AND SHORT STORIES

MUSIC

A couple of weeks before the commencement of Ramadan—that is, in the middle of the month of Syaban—Javanese society begins to transform itself. Islamic symbols otherwise rarely seen suddenly permeates all levels of the social and cultural life to an unprecedented degree, and it is motivated to

[303] Note, however, that several of Gymnastiar's other sermons—not discussed here—do touch upon these and similar topics.

speak of a temporary Islamization of society that only comes to an abrupt end some days following *Lebaran* (I., the feast marking the end of Ramadan). Included in this proposed temporary Islamization is the broadcasting of Islamic music in various contexts (TV, radio, shopping malls, mosques, Islamic centers, etc.). Most of the music is sung in Arabic and have no specific attachment to Ramadanic issues, but there is also a smaller genre of Malay-Indonesian Islamic music (I. *nasyid*, A. *nashīd*) which is highly popular. Indeed, some of the *nasyid* groups perform under rock concert-like circumstances during Ramadan, and copies of their CDs and cassettes sell extra well during this month.

Below I have transcribed, translated and commented upon some of the Ramadanic songs popular in Indonesia around the turn of the millenium. Due to external circumstances (in the form of me receiving the material on a private mp3 collection), I do not provide 'bibliographical information' for these songs. I should further state that some repetitions that occur in this musical material have been omitted in the description below, and that the notes and comments have been restricted to a minimum. The material is included here in order to show that Ramadan and Ramadanic sentiments are expressed in various forms. Music—especially Islamic music, it seems—is rarely considered in academic treatises, and it is thus this section's secondary aim to emphasis that music may be an alternative complement to written material and more standardized speeches in our search of knowledge.

I will begin with three songs of the most popular *nasyid* group in Indonesia—that is, *Raihan*. This is actually a Malaysian group, which has a reputation outside Southeast Asia too due to its collaboration with Yusuf Islam (formerly Cat Stevens). However, their foremost success has been in Indonesia. The first song considered here is entitled *Harapan Ramadhan* (M., The Hopes of Ramadan), and describes the hopes and expectations Muslims may have prior to the month of fasting.

[1] I hope Ramadan this year will be meaningful
that I can go through it infallibly
Step by step
a year has gone by
a time that has to pass by
so that I all of a sudden find myself in Ramadan again

[7] I hope Ramadan this year will be meaningful
that I can go trough it infallibly
It's a good deed to fast, as He has ordered
hopefully I can control the desires
that shackle me continuously

[12] I don't want to let Ramadan pass by just like that
God, guide me, I am weak
Let me wade across it all with patience

[15] I pray to God that I'll be given strength

I plead to God that my good deeds are accepted

[17] Step by step
with Your Grace, O God, I embark [on the Ramadanic road][304]

Expressed here is thus a wish that the present Ramadan will be carried out in line with the prescribed regulations, and that it will differ from previous Ramadans and give a special meaning to the faster. There is a Koranic reference in the ninth line: "as He has ordered" (QS 2:183). In the same line it is said that fasting is an *amalan*, translated here as 'a good deed.' The Malay *amalan*, which is derived from the Arabic *ʿamal*, has strong religious overtones and could be understood as any one act which is congruent with the will of God. *Nafsu* (A. *nafs*) in line 10, or desire, is the entity that in Sufi language usage demands *jihādu l-akbar* (A., the greater struggle), as compared to *jihādu s-saghīr* (A., the lesser struggle, i.e. physical warfare). In the twelfth line the fear that the month of fasting will routinely pass by without leaving any lasting marks is raised, and the following lines (13-16) actually constitute a pre-Ramadanic supplication, in which the supplicant asks for the strength to fast for one month, on the one hand, and for God to accept this fasting, on the other. It is indeed a frequently heard concern among fasting Muslims that although they may be successful in abstaining from food, drink, and sexual relations during daytime, they have no guarantees whatsoever that God will receive (I. *menerima*) and accept their fasting.

Another Ramadanic song from Raihan is entitled *Mulianya Ramadhan* (M., The Glory of Ramadan). This song too expresses some pre-Ramadanic anxieties, but it is more concerned with some of the glorious features of the month.

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[304] *Kumengharapkan Ramadhan kali ini penuh makna*
agar dapat kulalui dengan sempurna
Selangkah demi selangkah
masa yang pantas berlalu
hingga tak terasa kuberada di bulan Ramadhan semula

Kumengharapkan Ramadhan kali ini penuh makna
agar dapat kulalui dengan sempurna
Puasa satu amalan, sebagaimana yang diperintah-Nya
semoga dapat kulenturkan nafsu
yang selalau memgbelenggu diri tiada henti-henti

Tak ingin kubiarkan Ramadhan berlalu saja
Tuhan pimpinlah daku yang lemah
Mengharungi segalanya dengan sabar
Kumemohon kepada Tuhan diberikan kekuatan
Kumerayu pada Tuhan diterima amalan
Selangkah demi selangkah

[1] Tomorrow the fast begins
Only one month per year
Will we be able to complete it
to the very end?

[5] In the month of Ramadan we fast
Withholding ourselves from hunger and thirst
suppressing our raging desires
and training ourselves to do good deeds continuously

[9] During the month of Ramadan, the devils are in chains
The doors of goodness are wide open
as a sign of God's mercy and love
That's the magnificence of the month of Ramadan

[13] To perform supererogatory nightly prayers is a good deed
Make merry the blessed nights
To read the Koran is to add splendor [to the nights]
[it] calms down our hearts and purifies us

[17] Most extraordinary in the month of Ramadan
is the Night of Power
in which the angels descend to entertain us all
receiving our good deeds performed out of sincerity

[21] The month of Ramadan has gone by
and Syawal is here as a sign of victory
Are our good deeds complete?
Will we meet again
in the Ramadan to come?

[26] Tomorrow the fast begins
Only one month per year
Will we be able to complete it
to the very end?[305]

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[305] *Hari esok kita berpuasa*
Setahun sekali hanya sebulan
Sempatkah kita menyempurnakan
hingga sampai ke penghujungnya?

Sebulan Ramadhan kita berpuasa
Menahan diri dari lapar dahaga
menekan nafsu bermaharajalela
melatih diri beramal sen'tiasa

Sepanjang Ramadhan syaitan dalam rantaian
Terbuka luas pintu kebaikan
tanda rahmat, kasih sayang Tuhan
Itulah kemuliaan di bulan Ramadhan

Sholat tarawih menjadi amalan
Meriahkan lagi keberkatan malam
Tadarus Quran, penambah seri
tenangkan hati, membersihkan diri

The pre-Ramadanic anxiety is expressed in lines one through four, and later also in lines 21-29 as a rhetorical conclusion. In-between these we find statements on some basics of fasting (5-9), together with *ḥadīthic* reference (9-10), an enumeration of the glory of non-compulsory devotions (13-16), and finally a Koranic reference (17-20). The 'raging desire' in line seven is the same *nafsu* as discussed in *Harapan Ramadhan* above, as are the 'good deeds' (8, 13, 20, 23). Lines nine and ten refer to the following very popular *ḥadīth*:

> Allah's Apostle said: "When the month of Ramadan starts, the gates of Paradise are opened and the gates of Hell are closed and the devils are chained."[306]

The Koranic reference in lines 17-20 refers, of course, to QS 97:1-5.

> Behold, from on high have We bestowed this [divine writ] on the Night of Des tiny.[307]
> And what could make thee conceive what it is, that Night of Destiny?
> The Night of Destiny is better than a thousand months:
> in hosts descend in it the angels, bearing divine inspiration by their Sustainer's leave; from al [evil] that may happen
> does it make secure, until the rise of dawn.

There is no reference in this Koranic chapter, however, that the angels should 'receive' (M. *menyambut*) our deeds, and neither are there any specific references to the necessity of sincerity (M. *ikhlas*, from A. *ikhlāṣ*) in this connection.

The last Raihan song to be examined here is entitled *Lailatul Qadar* (M., Night of Power) and is thus explicitly concerned with a topic touched upon in *Mulianya Ramadhan*.

Paling istimewa di bulan Ramadhan
berlakunya malam lailatul qadar
Turunlah malaikat meraikan semua
menyambut amalan yang ikhlas di antara kita

Sebulan sudah Ramadhan bersama
tibalah Syawal tanda kemenangan
Sempurnakah segala amalan?
Adakah kita berjumpa semula
di Ramadhan yang akan datang?

Hari esok kita berpuasa
Setahun sekali hanya sebulan
Sempatkah kita menyempurnakan
hingga sampai ke penghujungnya?

[306] ḤB 3,31,123. Cf. ḤB 3,31,122; 4,54,497; ḤM 6,2361; 6,2362.
[307] *Laylat al-qadr* (A.) is variously translated as Night of Destiny and Night of Power.

[1] In the month of Ramadan there is one night
the value of which is as a thousand months
That is the Night of Power
a gift to His god-fearing servants

[5] In the month of Ramadan there is one night
the value of which is as a thousand months
Expose the screen the last ten days
let's compete in striving for His blessings
Vivify the nights, engage in worship and seclusion
pray, extol God, and ask for forgiveness

[11] What night is this?
About 83 years
surpassing man's usual fate
the age of the chosen Prophet's community
How lucky for His servants!

[16] In the month of Ramadan there is one night
whoever vivifies the Night of Power
will have her past sins forgiven
Expose the screen the last ten days
let's compete in striving for His blessings
Vivify the nights, engage in worship and seclusion
pray, extol God, and ask for forgiveness

[23] Such is the Night of Power[308]

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[308] *Di dalam bulan Ramadhan ada satu malam*
nilainya menyamai dengan seribu bulan
Itulah dia malam al-qadar
hadiah pada hamba-Nya yang bertakwa

Di dalam bulan Ramadhan ada satu malam
nilaibya menyamai dengan seribu malam
Singkaplah tabir di sepeuluh malam terakhir
berlumba kita mencari keridloan-Nya
Hidupkan malam, beribadah dan iktikaf
berdoa, bertasbih dan mohon ke ampunan

Malam apakah ini?
Kiranya 83 tahun
melangkaui kadar lazim biasa umum
usia umat nabi pilihan
Beruntunglah bagi hamba!

Di dalam bulan Ramadhan ada satu malam.
barangsiapa yang menghidupkan lailatul qadar
akan diampun dosa-dosanya yang silam
Singkaplah tabir di sepeuluh malam terakhir
berlumba kita mencari keridloan-Nya
Hidupkan malam, beribadah dan iktikaf
berdoa, bertasbih dan mohon ke ampunan
Itulah dia malam al-qadar

The Night of Power is here presented as a 'gift' (M. *hadiah*) to the 'god-fearing' (M. *yang bertakwa*) (4), who are encouraged to engage in devotional practices during the last part of Ramadan (7-10). To 'vivify the nights' (M. *hidupkan malam*) should be understood as engaging in such practices, primarily supererogatory prayers of different kinds. *Bertasbih* (10) is here translated as 'extol God,' and refers more precisely to the practice of using a rosary (M. *tasbih*, A. *misbaḥah*), and 83 years is the approximate value of one thousand months. In lines 17 and 18 a well-known *ḥadīth* is referred to:

> The Prophet said: "Whoever establishes prayers on the night of Qadr out of sincere faith and hoping for a reward from Allah, then all his previous sins will be forgiven; and whoever fasts in the month of Ramadan out of sincere faith, and hoping for a reward from Allah, then all his previous sins will be forgiven.[309]

There are thus good reasons for Muslims to engage in all possible kinds of worship during the last few days of Ramadan.

What follows is a children's song about Ramadan, entitled *Arti Puasa* (I., The Meaning of the Fast), recorded by the popular Tasya. In Indonesia, there is a lively business of children songs, and the major difference between these and their Western counterparts is that the former are sung by children themselves, who thus become celebrities (I. *bintang kecil*, 'small stars') in their own rights. It is a straightforward song with the text repeated three times.

[1] What is the meaning of the fast?	*Apakah arti puasa?*
To fast is to abstain from eating	*Puasa tidak makan*
To fast is to abstain from drinking	*Puasa tidak minum*
From dawn prayer to dusk prayer	*Sejak subuh sampai maghrib*
[5] What is the meaning of the fast?	*Apakah arti puasa?*
To fast is to withhold hunger	*Puasa menahan lapar*
To fast is to withhold thirst	*Puasa menahan haus*
And to watch over one's manners	*Dan menjaga perlikau*
[9] Allah is very delighted	*Allah sangat suka*
Allah is very pleased	*Allah sangat senang*
Fasting children will be rewarded	*Bagi anak puasa diberi pahala*
and Allah will place them in heaven	*ditempatkan Allah dalam surga*

This song is thus intended to give children an initial understanding of the month of fasting, in which Muslims are supposed to refrain from eating (2, 6) and drinking (3, 7) from dawn to dusk (4), and also to watch over their manners (8). These are undisputed Ramadanic basics, but what then follows in the last few lines is something quite different. Here we are told that Allah is pleased and delighted with children who fast, and that He will prepare room for them in heaven (9-12). Indeed, the promised reward for Muslims who fast

[309] ḤB 3,31,125.

out of sincere faith is Paradise (as we saw above), but there is no reference to my knowledge which makes special notice of fasting children. On the contrary, children are generally not thought of to be obliged to fast (see chapter two above).

Now, let us conclude this section on Ramadanic music with Isye's *Railah Kemenangan* (I., Obtain Victory), which deals with the feast of *Lebaran*.

[1] Happy holidays
Happy *Lebaran*
Obtain victory
inner and outer

[5] Let's shake hands
let's forgive each other
Obtain victory
inner and outer

[9] Yes, it is full of ordeals
loaded with temptations
Sometimes we commit errors and do mistakes
fear God,[310] and ask for His forgiveness
for the bliss of this world and the Other

[14] God is greater, God is greater, God is greater
there is no god but God, and God is greater
God is greater, and all praise is due to God[311] [312]

Presented here is thus a short allusion to the feast concluding the month of fasting, a feast which is presented as one where victory can be achieved (3), both outwardly and inwardly (4, 8). The concept of *lahir-batin* (I., A. *ẓāhir-bāṭin*), translated here as inner and outer, has Sufi connotations, and it is

[310] Lit. "make present your feeling of God-fear."

[311] *Selamat Hari Raya*
Selamat Hari Lebaran
Raihlah kemenangan
lahir dan batin
Mari, berjabat tangan
Mari, maaf-maafan
Raihlah kemenangan
lahir dan batin
Ya ini penuh coba
sarat godaan
Kadang ada kekhilafan dan kesalahan
hadirkanlah ketakwaan,
mohon ampun-Nya
Untuk suatu kebahagian dunia akhirat
Allahu akbar, Allahu akbar, Allahu akbar
la ilaha ilallahu wa Allahu akbar
Allahu akbar, wa lillahil hamd

[312] A. *Allāhu akbar, allāhu akbar, allāhu akbar, lā ilāha illā llāhu wa llāhu akbar. Allāhu akbar wa lillāhi l-ḥamd.*

invariably present in the holiday greetings said at the occasion. The song also makes references to the practices of shaking hands (5) and to forgiving and asking for forgiveness (6). Two verses (11 and 12) hint at the possibility of achieving divine forgiveness on the day of *Lebaran* (echoing a previously mentioned *ḥadīth*), and in the last three lines we find what in Java is referred to as *takbiran* (I., the extolling of God's name). This is a set formulae which is broadcast from all mosques from dusk on the last day of Ramadan throughout the night and up to the special ritual worship (I. *sholat 'id*, A. *al-ṣalāt al-ʿīd*) performed in the morning of 1 *Syawal* (A. *Shawwal*, the tenth lunar month).

POETRY

There are numerous poems touching upon the nature of Ramadan available in Indonesia, but most of them are just mere repetitions of some standard phrases that either praise the month of fasting as a 'noble guest' (I. *tamu agung*) or ponder upon the 'holiness' or 'purity' (I. *kesucian*) of the month. *Fitrilah Diri* (I., You will be pure), written by A. Mustofa Bisri differs from the others, and is thus included here.

[1] allow me to utter
happy holidays
in the midst of the business of scrapping up
the leftovers of myself

[5] from the suicidal bombs
with ammunition of hatred?
is there anyone who won the greatest jihad in the holy ramadan
from yesterday until today
return to the purity

[10] there is no longer anybody regarding himself
so elevated he can compete with
the absoluteness of God?
in the holy month I recite the Koran
hell is fire

[15] the devils are fire
the devils splash their fire which becomes hatred
becomes hell in the heart
that first of all inflame the self
o God, estrange me from the fire

[20] o God, estrange me from the fire
asked the holy scholar
seduced by the fire
and the angels came with divine love
expelled the fire that brought fire

[25] the heaven of victory has arrived before death
happy *idul fitri*
o servants and caliphs of god
purify yourself
you will be pure

[30] let go of all filth
all spite
let's return to climbing
do not fall again
do not commit suicide again[313] [314]

This poem was published the day before *Lebaran* in 2002/1423, when the Bali-bombing in October still was fresh in memory. Again, we see reference to the act of oppressing one's own desires as the greater *jihad* (7), and that fasting throughout Ramadan is an excellent example of this *jihad akbar* (I., great struggle, A. *al-jihādu l-akbar*). *Idul Fitri* or *Lebaran* is depicted as a 'the heaven of victory' (I. *sorga kemenangan* (25)), and the poem's main task indeed seems to be to remind us of the purity of this day.

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[313] *adakah yang sudi aku ucapi*
selamat idul fitr
di sela-sela kesibukan membenahi
serpihan-serpihan diri
dari ledakan bom-bom bunuh diri
dengan amunisi benci?
adakah yang menang jihad akbar di ramadan suci
kemarin ini hingga kini
kembali fitri
tak ada lagi yang menganggap diri
lebih tinggi hingga menyaingi
kemutlakan ilahi?
di bulan suci aku ngaji
neraka adalah api
setan adalah api
setan memercikkan apinya jadi benci
jadi neraka dalam hati
yang pertama-tama membakar hati
ya ilahi, jauhkan aku dari api
ya ilahi, jauhkan aku dari api
pinta ulama suci
yang digoda api
malaikat pun datang membawa kasih sayang ilahi
mengusir api yang membawa api
sorga kemenangan sudah datang sebelum mati
selamat idul fitr
wahai hamba dan khalifah rabbi
fitrikan diri
fitrilah diri
lepaskan segala daki
segala dengki
mari kembali mendaki
jangan jatuh lagi
jangan bunuh diri lagi

[314] Bisri 2002b.

Let us turn to another poem entitled *Ramadhan yang Suci* (I., Holy Ramadan) composed by Tien Marni:[315]

[1] Ramadan, O Ramadan
The crown of all months
A bridge to the eternal land
a hunting field for the beauty of the Grace offered

[5] The soul that beats in your pulse
destroyer of sins that emerge in silence
and hide in us, in our hearts, and in our never-ending dreams
The secret of your holiness, is your ability to muffle and
cleanse our worldly desires
Prostrations and supplications that we present

[10] in the tranquillity of your nights
make the universe quiver
the music of our divine sentences and *zikir*
is only for You, O God
in our yearning for Your Blessings

[15] I focus all the love I have
with the purest of hearts
Welcome, O Ramadan[316]

This poem was initially read at a Ramadan poetry workshop in Pekanbaru, Sumatra, and was later to be included in a compilation of Ramadanic poetry.[317] As is unveiled in the last line, this is a pre-Ramadan poem, thus expressing the expectations and hopes a Muslim may have prior to the commencement of the fast.

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[315] Marni 1994: 43.

[316] *Ramadhan ya Ramadhan*
Mahkota segala rembulan
Jembatan bagi negeri abadi
padang perburuan keindahan Rahmat yang ditawarkan
Ruh yang berdenyut dalam nadimu
pembakar dosa-dosa yang tumbuh dengan diamnya
sembunyi pada diri, pada hati, dan pada impian yang tiada bertepi
Rahasia kesucianmu peredam, dan pembasuh birahi duniawi

Sujut-sujut dan doa-doda yang kami persembahkan
pada malam-malammu yang sunyi
menggetarkan jagat raya
alunan kalimah dan zikir-zikir kami
hanya bagi Mu ya Rabbi
mendamba Ridho Mu
Kulabuhkan cinta yang kumiliki
dengan hati yang paling puith
Marhaban ya Ramadhan

[317] *Komite Sastra Dewan Kesenian Riau*: 1994. Most of the poems in this compilation show only vague connections to Ramadan, however.

The last poem to be translated and shortly considered here is simply entitled *Puasa* (I., Fast(ing)), composed by Taufik Ikram Jamil and included in the same compilation as Tien Marni's work.[318]

[1] in this room
I am no longer alone
since hunger since thirst
sticks to my worn-out endurance

[5] and then all of it turns into a book[319] of hopes
that is continuously wide-open now
next
how can I any longer consider important the act
of breaking the fast

[10] after the hunger of 'myselfs'
has evaporated 1,3 trillions of *rupiah*
in the midst of all overcome by hunger
how can I any longer consider important the act
of breaking the fast

[15] how can I, how can I, how can I
how can I any longer consider important the act
of breking the fast
after the thirst of 'myselfs'
becomes references becomes means of corruption[320]

[20] becomes deposits
in foreign banks
god
don't turn my hunger into eating
don't turn my thirst into drinking

[25] don't turn my endurance into anger
don't, god[321]

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[318] Jamil 1994: 25.

[319] The word for 'book' is here not the regular *buku* (I.) but rather *kitab* (I., A. *kitāb*) thus emphasizing the religious character of the work.

[320] The Indonesian word *katebelece* is translated as "informal note from o. powerful figure to another asking for action (to bypass bureaucracy or the like)" in Echols & Shadily's standard dictionary *Kamus Indonesia-Inggris* (1989: 265). 'Means of corruption' is thus an unsatisfactorily translation, but the general idea is perhaps expressed.

[321] *di kamar ini*
tak lagi aku sendiri-sendiri
sebab lapar sebab haus
tercetak pada tahanku yang lusuh
lantas semuanya menjadi sekitab harapan
yang kini selalu terdedah
syahdan
mana mungkin lagi kupentingkan berbuka
setelah lapar diri-diriku
menguapkan rp 1,3 trilyun
di tengah sekian banyak yang kebulur
mana mungkin lagi kupentingkan berbuka

The primary theme of this poem seems to be to express solidarity with more unfortunate fellow Muslims, while at the same time criticizing the economical and political elite in Indonesia. The author expresses his sense of solidarity by the expression 'myselfs' (I. *diri-diriku*)(line 10 and 18), that is a pluralization of 'myself' (I. *diriku*), and criticizes the elite for being uncaring towards the common people (11-12, 19-21). All this comes down to the 'conclusion' in the last five lines, that emphasize the Ramadanic truism that there is more to fasting than refraining from food, drink, and feelings of anger. Ramadanic fasting has to result in something, and that something is an understanding of the critical situation in Indonesia, and subsequent practical action. Thus, the hunger experienced during Ramadan is not only to be forgotten by eating after sunset or after *Idul Fitri* (23).

SHORT STORIES

Indonesians show an unprecedented affection for short stories. Every Sunday edition of newspapers contain at least one short story, and bookstores are full of collections of them. During the month of fasting some of these short stories (I. *cerita pendek*) take on a Ramadanic dress and provide their readers with Ramadanic topics. Sadly enough, however, topics and themes and the way they are enwrapped show large similarities with Ramadanic soap operas (discussed below). Consequently, it is not uncommon that in these stories a rather gloomy picture of the reality is drawn up, just to be altered, enlightened, and blessed by situations or practices with Ramadanic connection. And this is not only true for the works of unestablished young authors published in local newspapers; as respected authors as Muhammad Diponegoro, Kuntowijoyo, and Ahmad Tohari, have all shown proof of this in a recently published collection of Ramadanic short stories entitled *Mudik*.[322]

I choose here just to mention the existence of these short stories, and thereby spare my readers of any further discussion or analysis of them.

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mana mungkin, mana mungkin, mana mungkin
mana mungkin lagi kupentingkan berbuka
setelah haus diri-diriku
menjadi referensi menjadi katebelece
menjadi deposito
di bank-bank asing
tuhan
jangan jadikan laparku untuk makan
jangan jadikan hausku untuk minum
jangan jadikan tahanku untuk amarah
jangan tuhan

[322] Diponegoro *et al.* [1996] 2002.

RAMADANIC INTERNET AND TELEVISION

Although criticized in some circles for being just a way to escape time or to catch up on some immoralities,[323] spending time in air-conditioned Internet cafés is a popular activity in urban centers in Indonesia—not the least during Ramadan. I have no statistics on how common it actually is for Indonesian Muslims to consult World Wide Web Ramadan sources, but the existence of a number of Indonesian sites devoting considerate amount of space to Ramadanic topics seems to suggest that information on the holy month is extensively searched for on the Internet. I will here confine myself just to mention a few popular sites and their contents; interested readers may easily visit the sites themselves.

One of the most comprehensive and interesting Indonesian Ramadan site is that of *Pesantren Virtual* (I., Virtual Islamic Boarding School).[324] It hosts a substantial collection of both original Indonesian and translated material, and presents Ramadan from a variety of angles. It thus exhibits discussions of the boons (I. *hikmah*) of Ramadan, together with Ramadanic sermons (I. *ceramah*) and gems (I. *mutiara*). The site also presents large sections of questions asked by Indonesian Internet users, and answered by the *Pesantren Virtual* team (I. *tanya jawab*). In this section one find questions concerning virtually any thinkable Ramadanic topic, ranging from the regulations of fasting for breast feeding mothers to the possibility of getting married during the holy month.

Another popular Ramadan site is to be found at the *MyQuran* homepage.[325] Here, virtual guests can read articles from the *MyQuran* team as well as from other readers who have sent their writings to the site. Apart from the usual articles on *rukyatul hilal*, *lailatul qadar*, *takwa*, and *tarawih* prayers, one also finds Ramadanic recipes and health tips, amongst other things. Though being quite well maintained, not few links are inaccessible.

At the *Masjid Resources Center* a large collection of Ramadanic articles can be found too.[326] Much of the material, however, was originally published elsewhere, and the site thus functions as a collection of relevant links to a large extent.

In addition to these three sites, mention should also be made of the existence of various Islamic e-groups in Indonesia, all of which hosts Ramadanic discussions during the holy month.

Before summing this chapter up, I will make a few remarks on Indonesian television during Ramadan. Initially, I did not intend to include such remarks in this work—and that is one reason why my material is so scarce—

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[323] *Majalah Ar-Risalah* 2002: 23.

[324] [http://www.pesantrenvritual.com/ramadhan]. At the time of writing (August 2003) the site is under reconstruction, but old material will most likely be accessible on the new site too.

[325] [http://www.myquran.com/ramadhan]

[326] [http://www.masjid.or.id/artikel/ramadhan/index_ramadhan.htm]

but I slowly came to realize that it would be unfair not to do that. Generally, Javanese seem to love watching TV, and it is not uncommon in towns and cities that people (especially women) spend several hours a day in front of the television. During Ramadan—when the afternoon minutes may seem long and energy is expensive—this time is not rarely increased further, and catering to this increase are several special Ramadan shows. Every TV station in the country presents loads of special Ramadanic shows during the month, and even the Indonesian MTV has its own Ramadan special (I. *Ramadhan bareng MTV*, it was called in 2002), presented in the midst of indigenous and Western video clips (generally not living up to 'Islamic ideals'). The temporary Islamization Javanese society undergoes during the month of fasting is perhaps especially revealing in the world of television, and that is the reason I include these short notes here.

A few days before the commencement of Ramadan, Indonesian TV undergoes several changes. The first is that the presenters and news anchors begin to wear veils (I. *jilbab*) if they happen to be female, and fez-like caps (I. *peci*) if they happen to be male. They also start to use the Islamic greeting more frequently, and may even provide their audiences with some words of Islamic wisdom. The second change occurs within the world of commercials, because these too are Islamized to a large degree during Ramadan.[327] In fact, almost every TV commercial that appears during the month of fasting are connected—in some way or another, logically or not—to the obligatory Islamic ritual (more on this below). The third change concerns the Indonesian local soap operas (I. *sinetron*). Each year during Ramadan, several different TV stations proudly present their special Ramadanic *sinetron*, which are immensely popular. These, which may be continuous and recurring affairs from year to year, generally have as their main characters an economically well-off but spiritually deprived young man or woman, and a spiritually high-developed but economically poor equivalent. The 'impossible' love between them, of course, becomes the main problem during the five or six weeks the *sinetron* is broadcast. Living through unthinkable trials and hardships, they finally receive both families' blessings on the prosperous day of *Lebaran*, when all criminals and wrong-doers also turn to Islam and realize their mistakes. (As with most of Indonesian TV production, these soap operas are, according to the writer, very dull affairs.)

When Ramadan finally begins, we find more special shows: at 3 a.m. most stations start the day off with their nocturnal *sahur* shows, which then are followed in a steady stream by Koran reading sessions, Ramadan cooking shows, 'ask-and-get-an-answer' (I. *tanya-jawab*) sessions, Ramadan quiz shows, etc., which are broadcast in the middle of the usual Indian and Chinese movies. (During some years, one station has also broadcast the *tarawih* prayers live from Mecca.) Both KH Zainuddin MZ and Abdullah Gymnastiar—whose audio cassettes occupied us above—are very popular during

[327] See further Möller 2004.

these Ramadan shows, and both of them are usually present in more than one of them each day. Zainuddin has for several years now presented his audience with both *sahur* and *berbuka* (I. breaking [the fast]) words of wisdom, comprising some fifteen minutes. Apart from these, he also has his special weekly sermons which are broadcast live in national TV, and may show up in various other contexts. Aa Gym is nowadays perhaps even more popular than Zainuddin and can show up in five or six different contexts and stations during one and the same day. The *sahur* and *berbuka* shows are slightly different at the various stations, but they generally include discussions with *ulama* on given topics, a Ramadanic quiz (often with connection to the topic of the day), and cooking sessions. It is not uncommon that Jakartan (music-, television-, movie-) artists join these discussions, and act as a kind of pseudo-*ulama*. That these artists, who during eleven months a year are occupied by quite 'un-Islamic' (in various senses) activities, emerge as devout Muslims in veils and caps during Ramadan, and comments on various Islamic topics bothers some Javanese, others not.[328]

Let us conclude with a few words on the advertisements. A great majority of the Ramadanic TV commercials concerns either food or drink, and the fasting Indonesians are thus presented with never-ending (it seems) temptations on their screens. Pictures of ice tea and hot sweetened coffee mix generously with pictures of trays with newly fried chicken, steaming rice, and hot chili sauce. (I have never heard any complaints about this in Java, which is interesting considering that people selling cooked food during Ramadan may be occasionally criticized for their businesses. This too, however, is quite rare.)

Another large part of the commercials is—just as in non-Ramadanic contexts in Indonesia—concerned with either detergents or medicine. Detergents are presented as one way to reach the purity which both the color white and Ramadan itself symbolizes, whereas the medicine ads are concerned with certain health problems fasting may cause, and—as we draw closer to *Lebaran*—questions of motion sickness. At times, the Ramadan commercials are not at all connected to normative Islam, whereas at other times normative Islam is very much called upon. As an example of the first category, mention can be made of commercials selling mosquito repellents in various forms, where the connection to Ramadan is that one should not be disturbed by insects while performing religious rituals. In several different toothpaste (!) commercials, however, *ḥadīthic* material is referred to. In one such ad it is for example stated that not all devils are shackled during Ramadan (I. *tidak semua setan dibelenggu selama Ramadhan*), and that one has to take special notice of the mouth devils (I. *setan mulut*) during the month of fasting—preferably with the advertised product. Interestingly, the ad does not quote a

[328] The indigenous critique towards various Ramadan TV-shows in Indonesia is rather weak, and indeed one of the few who repeatedly criticize parts of them is Cholil Bisri (see Bisri 2000b: 32f, 2000c: 63).

hadits, but rather makes usage of a well-known one and even alters its meaning. According to a this *hadits*, the prophet said that the devils are shackled and the doors to heaven wide-opened when Ramadan begins. In the commercial world then, it is added that the mouth devils are not shackled at all! Another toothpaste ad has it that one during Ramadan has to guard over one's eyes, one's ears, and one's mouth (I. *jaga mata, jaga telinga, jaga mulut*). This refers to another well-known *hadits* in which the prophet is reported as having said that it is not sufficient just to stop eating, drinking and having sexual relations during Ramadan. Muhammad's idea of guarding over one's mouth was, however, not to use a certain toothpaste, but rather to refrain from engaging one's mouth in slandering and gossiping. A third toothpaste commercial has it, finally, that it constitutes an act of devotion to smile (I. *senyum itu ibadah*), and that lots of smiling will increase the divine blessings (I. *banyak senyum, tambah pahala*). And this is preferably done with shining white teeth.

WINDING IT UP

This chapter has discussed various popular and contemporary media views on Ramadan in Indonesia. In doing this, it has presented a variety of such media: Ramadanic handbooks, newspaper articles, recorded sermons, music, poetry, and more.

In the first part, which discussed the monographs, we saw that similar topics and themes were discussed in the selected material, though from slightly different points of departure. For example, all of the authors who discussed the problems of the dating of the first of Ramadan settled for *rukyah* as the preferred method for this enterprise, but they did so from different premises, and they also held different positions concerning the relation between Indonesian Ramadan and its worldwide equivalent. From their discussion of the *tarawih* prayers, we learned that these Ramadanic handbooks presented quite liberal—albeit occasionally puzzling—standpoints. The real problem, as displayed in these books, was not the exact number of *raka'at* to be performed, but rather the sincerity (I. *keikhlasan*) of the performer and the extent to which s/he was able to perform them in full devotion (I. *dengan khusyuk*). Likewise, we also saw that it was not the exact date of *Lailatul Qadar* that was of primary importance to the authors of these works—and hence the Indonesian Muslim community—, but rather what to do when this prosperous night finally arrives.

In the Ramadanic articles discussed, we did not find so much ritual guidance as in the monographs, but rather theoretical and jurisprudential discussions of the fast. We saw how the authors exerted themselves in order to koranically contextualize the Muslim fast, and how they elaborated upon the concept of *takwa*—attainment of which is the ultimate Koranic goal of

Ramadanic fasting. We also discerned in these articles a disappointment over the discrepancy between hoped for Ramadanic effects and the socio-political reality in Indonesia. Although Ramadan has gone by several times since the commencement of the multidimensional crisis in the country, one author argued, no real progress is discernable, something that must be taken as proof of the inability of the Indonesian Muslim community to implement Ramadanic values. In other words, Ramadan was not felt to be utilized as the momentum it should.

The third part of the chapter discussed some recorded Ramadan sermons presented by KH Zainuddin MZ and KH Abdullah Gymnastiar. In Zainuddin's sermons we experienced socio-political critique, humorous rhetoric, untiring support for the unity of the Indonesian Republic, and examples of how one can discuss Ramadan from a variety of angles that could be said to be situated in the Ramadanic periphery. Aa Gym, on the other hand, presented us with emotional discussions of the holy month, encompassing both tears and joyous inspiration. In doing this he provided us with a down-to-earth treatment of the fast and practical advice on how to implement his imperatives in our daily lives.

In the fourth part I turned to some other media, namely music, poetry, and short stories. The importance of this passage lay in the music and poetry itself, and I thus focused on the transcription and translation of the media, and left the analytical discussions at a minimum. In listening to the music and reading the poetry, we can better apprehend the hopes, expectations, fears, and dreams 'ordinary Muslims' may have in relation to Ramadan, and that is the foremost reason I decided to include this material here. Apart from this, of course, popular music and poetry is a much neglected area in studies of history of religion.

The last parts shortly discussed Indonesian Ramadan on the Internet and on TV—two forms of media that in no way stand outside the influence of the month of fasting. I referred the readers to some Ramadanic sites on the World Wide Web, and only commented in passing on some of the features of Ramadanic television.

In all this material we find very little information on what *not* to do in Ramadan, or what might happen should one ignore the fast totally. Criticism directed towards existing practices is also held at a minimum, and sensitive matters capable of blowing up full-fledged conflicts are seemingly deliberately tuned down. These questions will be addressed later in greater detail; now we will turn our attention to the ways in which the Javanese actually perform the fast.

CHAPTER FIVE

LIVED RAMADAN
THE JAVANESE CASE

Having discussed Ramadan's Arabic textual, legitimizing foundations ('normative Ramadan'; chapter three) together with some of the popular Indonesian media expressions this holy month recently has generated ('written Ramadan'; chapter four), it is now time to turn our attention to the actual and practical sides of it, as observable in central Java. In doing this, we will focus not only on the 'purely religious' aspects of Ramadan, but rather try to weigh these features against their more mundane equivalents. The primary aim of this chapter is thus to convey a picture of how Javanese Muslims understand, perform, and enjoy the month of Ramadan. I need to stress the latter verb here: *enjoy*. Can anyone really take pleasure in a month long fast in the tropical heat? Is not the Ramadanic fast just an annual and ever recurring horror for the Muslim community? How can this seeming torment be longed for by Muslims? Are they just faking this longing? In sum, can Ramadanic fasting be *enjoyable*? To this latter question, Richard T. Antoun, and many with him, would give a straightforward 'no,' and instead argue for the opposite: Ramadanic fasting can *never* be enjoyable. Muslims performing the annual fast are thus in fact suffering—regardless of what they say—, and "those who suffer most during the fast are retired pilgrims and shopkeepers who have little to do but reflect on their discomfort."[1] A slightly more nuanced comment is provided by the well-known Indonesian anthropologist Koentjaraningrat in that he says that "Javanese people are interested in seeking hardship and suffering discomfort deliberately for religious reasons,"[2] but the idea is still that we are dealing with some kind of suffering here. My understanding of the Javanese understanding of Ramadan does not, however, conform to such

[1] Antoun 1968b: 101.
[2] Koentjaraningrat 1985b: 372.

a view. Instead, it is obvious how much Ramadan is waited upon each year in Java, and how it is enjoyed once it has arrived. True, some Javanese Muslims do complain about the hardships Ramadan presents to its believers, but few seems to suggests that these hardships would not be compensated by what this month has to offer.

The Javanese understanding of Ramadan or *Pasa* cannot be explained in a vacuum, and is hence contextualized by means of discussions of the months of *Ruwah* and *Sawal* here.[3] It is in *Ruwah* Javanese Muslims become aware that Ramadan is approaching, whereas it is in *Sawal* that the end of the month long fast is celebrated by means of the *Lebaran* feast. Consequently, *Ruwah* holds some pre-Ramadanic rituals and *Sawal* some post-Ramadanic equivalents.

THE MONTH OF RUWAH

Entering the month of *Ruwah*[4] (J., I. *Syaban*, A. *Shaᶜbān*), Javanese Muslims are reminded that the month of fasting is just around the corner. Before actual fasting in *Pasa* may begin, several issues and rituals have to be settled and performed. Taking into consideration that very few substantial (non-religious, non-ritual) activities will be carried out in Ramadan due to a needed shift in rhythm and tempo, many Muslims are eager to finish off whatever they have going. The month of *Ruwah* is consequently quite a busy month, in which pending activities are to be wrapped up (at least temporarily), unsettled relations settled, and other Ramadanic preparations be carried out. Furthermore, it is very likely that the month of fasting, and especially its conclusion by means of the *Lebaran* feast, will require some additional economical resources, and these have to be hunted for during this month too. All things considered, Javanese Muslims have little extra spare time in the month of *Ruwah*, and are thus not very likely, for example, to go to the trouble of ar-

[3] The Javanese months correspond to their Arabic and Indonesian counterparts as follows:

1. *Sura* [Muḥarram, *Muharam*]
2. *Sapar* [Safar, *Safar*]
3. *Mulud* [Rabīᶜu l-awwal, *Rabiulawal*]
4. *Bakda Mulud* [Rabīu l-ṯānī, *Rabiulakhir*]
5. *Jumadil Awal* [Jumādā l-ūlā, *Jumadilawal*]
6. *Jumadil Akhir* [Jumādā l-ākhirah, *Jumadilakhir*]
7. *Rejeb* [Rajab, *Rajab*]
8. *Ruwah* [Shaᶜbān, *Syaban*]
9. *Pasa* [Ramaḍān, *Ramadhan*]
10. *Sawal* [Shawwal, *Syawal*]
11. *Sela* [Dhū l-qaᶜdah, *Zulkaedah*]
12. *Besar* [Dhū l-ḥijjah, *Zulhijah*]

[4] The Javanese name *Ruwah* derives it name from the Arabic word for soul, *rūḥ* (pl. *arwāḥ*). As will become evident below, there is a strongly felt connection with the souls of the deceased during this month in Java.

ranging marriages in this month—something which contrasts with reports from elsewhere in the Muslim world.[5] Occasional weddings do occur, of course, but it is more in line with Javanese culture to get married during the months of *Besar* and *Mulud*.[6] Those who choose to get married just prior to the month of fasting often make reference to their eagerness to carry out the Ramadanic fast together with their beloved one, and their felt need to 'settle their minds' prior to this demanding ritual. Their critics have another opinion on the matter, however, and argue—half jokingly—that it is rather dumb to get married just ahead of Ramadan, since they new-weds cannot 'consume' their marriage during daytime anyway, and since they are supposed to perform *traweh* prayers during the nights. How this can settle anyone's mind is a quandary for them. Nevertheless, people occasionally do get married in *Ruwah*, and some atypical weddings even occur during *Pasa*. This latter event is, however, commonly regarded as quite strange (i.e. to be caused by premarital pregnancy).[7]

Ruwah is also the month in which several pre-Ramadanic festivals are arranged. These are generally local and secular events, but have nevertheless a clear connection to the month of fasting, as their primary purpose seems to be to welcome the noble guest of Ramadan. Ramadan carnivals like these generally include processions and parades throughout the city center, and attract huge crowds of passive participants. In Semarang, the provincial capital of Central Java, this yearly carnival is known as the *Dugderan* (J.), and includes the mayor beating the traditional Javanese drum (J. *bedug*) as the official sign of the city's welcoming (J. *nyambut*) of the month of Ramadan. Apart from this, the Semarang *Dugderan* also contains performances of traditional local dances, and a colorful procession (I. *arak-arakan*) in the city center that aggravates the already chaotic traffic.[8] As the festival is arranged on the last day of *Ruwah* it is clear that it has two main objectives: to 'welcome' or 'receive' the month of fasting, and to provide local residents with some final secular entertainment before the commencement of the fast. Schools, and not the least kindergartens, habitually arrange their own parades some time prior to the arrival of Ramadan. The objective of such initiatives is to endow children with a positive emotional connection to the month of fasting, so as to ensure their life-long love of it. Indeed, many Javanese Muslims have lasting memories from their childhood months of fasting.

In this line of 'welcoming' the month of fasting, enthusiastic Javanese Muslims also set up street banners (I. *spanduk*)—financed by their Islamic organizations, mosques, political parties, or own grocery stores—in frequently trafficked intersections throughout cities, towns, and villages. Such

[5] Buitelaar 1993: 31f.
[6] Koentjaraningrat 1985b: 127.
[7] There is, however, not really a "strict taboo" to get married during Ramadan, as Koentjaraningrat had it (1985b: 127), and the more 'orthodox' Islamic idea is that *all* days are equally good for weddings (or other activities).
[8] See *Suara Merdeka* 2002-11-06d.

banners may have different objectives: most are satisfied with welcoming Ramadan in either Arabic or Indonesian,[9] whereas others take the opportunity of wishing its readers a successful performing of the fast.[10] Others yet express their ideas of Ramadan as a momentum in which seeds of communism or other immoralities preferably may be exterminated.[11] Common to all is a discernable longing for the fast to commence. Another—not so pleasant—sign of the approaching Ramadan is also to be found in intersections throughout larger cities and towns in Java: the seasonal beggars. As the prophet, Javanese Muslims are most generous during the month of fasting, and this has caused a movement of poor rural Javanese from their daily unemployment to the busy streets of urban centers in Indonesia, where they try their luck. Consequently, large cities are flooded by seasonal beggars some time before and during the month of Ramadan.[12]

Two Ramadan *spanduk* close to the town square in Blora.

Characterizing *Syaban* are also repeated reports from throughout Java of rising grocery prices and worries over the sufficiency of supplies. As the important pre-Ramadanic ritual of *ruwahan* (to be discussed below) requires substantial amounts of foodstuff, this condition justly distresses many Javanese Muslims. It is primarily the price and supply of rice that make people anxious—in Semarang alone no less than 50 tons of rice is sold every day—but price and availability of other commodities such as eggs, sugar, chili, and

[9] A. *Marḥabān yā Ramaḍān*, I. *Selamat datang bulan puasa*.
[10] I. *Selamat menunaikan ibadah puasa: semoga ibadah kita diterima Allah SWT*.
[11] I. *Jadikanlah Ramadhan sebagai momentum untuk memberantas benih-benih komunisme-maksiat*.
[12] *Kompas* 2002-11-02.

chicken are seeds of worries too.[13] Taking into consideration that prices at times are raising with fifty percent or more, we easily understand that these worries are well-grounded. Fears of failing stocks are, nevertheless, generally unfounded. In fact, the Indonesian government has a well-developed system for monitoring the *sembako* supplies throughout the country, and receives daily reports from local agencies concerning both prices and supplies.[14] It seems thus that prices do not rise due to a general fear of failing stocks, but rather to an increasing demand of these commodities. In addition, vendors do not hesitate to raise the prices slightly, since they too will celebrate the end of Ramadan later, and be in need of some extra *rupiah*.

As a sudden increase in prices of basic commodities in combination with additional Ramadanic expenses put many Javanese Muslims in an untenable economic situation, we should not be too surprised that the businesses of pawnshops flourish both before and during Ramadan in Java. Apart from numerous local brokers with dubious methods and philosophies, Indonesia also is the home of a national pawnshop service (I. *pegadaian*) whose local offices throughout the country are ever ready to provide their customers with cash money as long as they have something valuable to pawn. This pawn service (I. *jasa gadai*) usually attracts pieces of jewelry, electronic equipment, and motorcycles as Ramadan draws close, and the month of fasting is undoubtedly the busiest month of the year at these offices. In addition to the pawn service, the *pegadaian* also has a deposit service (I. *jasa titipan*) where customers may deposit their valuables safely and inexpensively as they leave their homes for a longer period of time (and this they may do in connection with *Lebaran*).

Whether financed by newly acquired pawn money or not, another sure sign of the approaching Ramadan is the commerce in various Islamic stores. Larger towns in Java are homes to such special Islamic stores selling Muslim dress and paraphernalia, and they become increasingly busy as *Syaban* approaches its end. Suddenly it is as if every Javanese Muslim makes her way to this kind of store due to an immediate felt need to buy a new veil, a copy of the Koran, a prayer rug, a sermon audio cassette, or some other Islamic utensil. Islamic dress—both male and female—is more popular during Ramadan than during any other month in Java, and people thus tend to buy new veils (I. *jilbab*), caps (I. *peci*), sarongs (I. *sarung*), and Muslim shirts (I. *baju koko*) at an unprecedented pace in this pre-Ramadan month. Since they not only buy this stuff but wear it too, this temporary attachment to Islamic dress ensures that various areas of Javanese public life are further Islamized before and during Ramadan. Public figures—including politicians and TV announcers—also contribute to this temporary Islamization by means of their

[13] In Indonesia, the 'nine basic commodities' (I. *sembilan bahan pokok*, abbreviated as *sembako*) are: rice, sugar, cooking oil, chicken meat and beef, eggs, milk, corn, kerosene, and salt. To these, most Javanese would add chilies, however.
[14] *Suara Merdeka* 2002-11-09.

dress. Those who cannot afford or feel no need to provide themselves with new clothes and other paraphernalia during every *Syaban* may instead be satisfied with washing their prayer rug and *mukena* (I., prayer dress for women), and dust of their copy of the Koran. Indeed, walking through any Javanese *kampung* during the week foregoing the month of fasting, one will inevitably see loads of newly washed *sajadah* (I., prayer rug) and *mukena* laying in the sun.

Should one not be willing to spend money on Islamic paraphernalia, illegal firecrackers (I. *mercon, petasan*) could perhaps be an alternative. These are so intimately connected to Ramadan—indeed, the presence of firework peddlers is another sure sign of the approaching Ramadan—that they hardly can be found in Javanese towns outside of this month. The fact that such firecrackers are illegal does not prevent them from being sold openly along the roads (although this may result in imprisonment), and neither does it seem to present any moral dilemmas to the buyers. True, the Indonesian police frequently confiscate tens or even hundreds of thousands of firecrackers during one and the same day in *Syaban*, but these crackdowns does hardly ensure the elimination of this illegal stuff from the black market. Sadly, due to poor quality and untidy usage, each year is sure to witness a few serious—at times fatal—accidents before and during Ramadan.

Before concluding this initial discussion and continue to some other *Ruwah* topics deserving their own sections, mention should be made of the practice of taking a ritual cleansing bath just prior to the month of fasting. Although Indonesia has no tradition of visiting public baths as certain Muslim areas elsewhere have, existing public baths, swimming pools of luxury hotels, and rivers in the countryside attract loads of Javanese Muslims during the day immediately before Ramadan.[15] The intent of the visitors is to ritually cleanse themselves from worldly filth before entering the holy Ramadan. In Javanese, this practice of taking a ritual bath before the commencement of the month of fasting is referred to by the word *padusan*, whereas its Arabic equivalent is *ghusl.* Although public beaches and pools may attract thousands of visitors during the last of *Syaban*, it must be acknowledged that the vast majority of the Javanese Muslim community does not attend public baths during this day. However, as they take their evening bath at home—Javanese unreservedly bath twice a day—many state in silence their intent of performing the major ritual ablution due to the approaching Ramadan. Then again, this is also done during other, more regular evenings since they anyway soon enough are going to perform the *maghrib* ritual prayer, and thus, so to say, are in need of ritual purity. The importance attached by the Javanese to the *padusan* should thus not be exaggerated; nor should it be denied, however. In Blora there is to my knowledge no tradition of *padusan*, and this is probably due to the fact that water rarely is to be found in any large supplies in this town; on the contrary, (severe) drought is often characterizing the climate

[15] See for example *Suara Merdeka* 2002-11-06e, 2002-11-06f, *Kompas* 2002-11-06b.

there. In fact, a few days prior to the commencement of the month of fasting in 2002, the *imam* at the town mosque arranged special prayers in which rain was asked for (I. *sholat istisqa'*, A. *ṣalātu l-istisqāʾ*) at the town square, which attracted large crowds of hopeful Muslims. (The first rain in months fell the next day.) Whereas other Javanese thus may perform the major ritual ablution by way of boisterous *padusan* rituals during the last day of *Ruwah*, Blorans are more likely to utter supplications asking for rain to fall. The lack of water is indeed a common complaint during this month, and this complaint is frequently connected to the approaching Ramadan. "How are we supposed to fast for thirty days," one elderly woman once rhetorically asked me, "if we have no water to cook with or wash our clothes with?" Of course, I was not to answer that question, but noticed later when the fast actually had begun that the woman observed the ritual scrupulously—in spite of the fact that the seasonal rains were yet to come.

Though this chapter does not deal with popular Ramadanic literature, it is very tempting to quote Suyuti here, in order to convey a common Javanese standpoint as the month of fasting draws close.

> The presence of Ramadan is always enjoyed by the Muslim community, since it connects the faithful with the Creator by way of the warmth of faith and *takwa*. This month, full of majesty, forgiveness, and love, has been made a central [devotional] activity by people who *takwa*, in order to worship God the Most High totally, so that they may get even closer to Him and have their supplications and requests for forgiveness granted.[16]

THE *HISAB-RUKYAT* CONTROVERSY

As we repeatedly have seen above, the exact dating of the commencement—and the conclusion—of Ramadan has been, and still is, a matter of disputes between various groups of the Muslim community in Java. Discussions about the various techniques to settle for a specific date, and their alleged superiorities, are bound to materialize every year. Most often, these debates can refrain from taking on hideous overtones and dimensions by the simple fact that the results reached by the different groups are identical, although different methods and techniques have been employed in the process. Some years, however, the results do not coincide, whereupon unpleasant tensions polarize the community into two major groups, which correspond quite well to that of modernists and traditionalists (as discussed above). The year 2001 (1422 AH) was such a year.

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[16] Suyuti 1996: 17. *Keberadaan Ramadhan selalu dinikmati oleh kaum muslimin karena telah menghubungkan orang-orang yang beriman kepada Sang Khalik melalui iman dan takwa. Bulan yang penuh keagungan, pengampunan, dan kasih saying itu, telah dijadikan sentral kegiatan oleh orang-orang yang takwa untuk menyembah Allah Swt. secara total, sehingga mereka semakin dekat kepada-Nya dan semua doa serta permohonan tobatnya dikabulkan oleh-Nya.*

Preliminaries

The controversy is often referred to as the *hisab-rukyat* controversy in Indonesia, and we thus realize that its roots are to be found in different opinions as to whether the presence of the new moon should be calculated (I. *hisab*) or visually spotted (I. *rukyat* or *rukyatul hilal*). Indonesian modernists are generally in preference of the *hisab* method, whereas the Indonesian government (via *Departemen Agama*) and the traditionalists prefer the *rukyatul hilal* technique. As we have seen, both groups find scriptural support in the Koran and in the *sunnah* of the prophet. As for the year 2001, Indonesian Muslims began to become aware of the possibility that the *umat* might begin the annual fast on different days in the beginning of November. According to Muhammadiyah's calculations, *ijtima* (I., astral conjunction) would occur on the 15th at 13.41 (Western Indonesian Time), whereas the height of the crescent moon (I. *hilal*) should vary between 0,2 to 2,1 degrees (depending on geographical location in the country). Consequently, Muhammadiyah proclaimed that Ramadan 1422 would commence on Friday, November 16th. Not all Indonesian modernists were in agreement with this, however. The modernist organization Persis, for example,—who generally prefer the *hisab* method too—came to the conclusion that although the presence of the new moon could be calculated, its height was too low to deem the 16th to correspond to the first of Ramadan. Persis modernists thus decided to commence the fast on Saturday (the 17th). As it happened, this date coincided with that which the government and the traditionalist Nahdlatul Ulama also settled for, after having had *rukyatul hilal* sessions all over the country. Though acknowledging that the moon would rise over the horizon (I. *ufuk*) on the 15th,[17] traditionalists were unable of actually spotting the *hilal* in the evening of this date and consequently began their fasting first on Saturday.[18]

Rukyatul hilal sessions are arranged throughout the country from various official *pos pengamatan* (I., observation posts) as well as from various other spots arranged by local organizations and *ulama*. These posts and all the governmental Islamic courts (I. *pengadilan agama* and *pengadilan tinggi agama*) report to the Ministry of Religious Affairs during the night in which these sessions are conducted, as might individuals do. The Ministry then holds a special convention (I. *sidang itsbat*), headed by the Minister himself and including the *Badan Hisab-Rukyat* (I. *Hisab-Rukyat* Body; established in 1972), in which discussions on the collected material are held. When agreement has been reached, a statement is issued (and spread throughout the country as fast as possible) concerning their understanding of the com-

[17] The Ministry of Religious Affairs acknowledges that there is no consensus as to the needed height for enabling the observation of the new crescent moon; some argue that seven degrees is the minimum, whereas for others, four degrees is sufficient. The Ministry itself has, however, received reports from Sukabumi that 2,15 degrees enables visualization (*Departemen Agama* 1994/1995: 16).

[18] *Pesantren.net* 2001.

mencement of Ramadan, and this constitutes the official Indonesian standpoint on the matter. A collection of such statements (covering the years 1962-1997) was recently published by the *Departemen Agama*.[19] This volume enables us to better understand the processes behind every taken decision concerning this delicate question. We learn that the decisions are only taken by the Minister of Religious Affairs after he has heard (I. *mendengar*), observed (I. *memperhatikan*), also heard (I. *mendengar pula*), also considered (I. *menimbang pula*), and remembered (I. *mengingat*) several opinions, authorities, and conditions. The decision taken in 1381/1962—to mention just one example—was thus preceded by *hearing* (via telephone) the testimony of three Muslims from Sukabumi (their names, ages, and occupations are listed), who on the 5th of February at 18.55 (local time) saw the new crescent moon for approximately two minutes. It is stated that these three men—all witnesses mentioned are male, as the Shāfiᶜī legal school demands—swore that they really saw the crescent, and that these words of oath then were strengthened by them pronouncing the *syahadat* in the presence of the Head of the Islamic Court in Sukabumi. This in itself did not lead up till the decision, however; in addition, the Minister *observed* the calculations of the *hisab* specialists, and *also heard* the opinions of no less than six religious authorities. He *also considered* the *syahadat* of the three Muslims to be acceptable, and *remembered* some of the earlier decisions on the matter from the Ministry of Religious Affairs. All this taken together then led him to decide that the first of Ramadan 1381 coincided with February 6, 1962. This decision was issued at 20.05 Western Indonesian Time—a time at which parts of the *umat* probably already had anticipated later developments that night and performed their *tarawih* prayers.

As for the arrangement of the *rukyat* sessions themselves, the Ministry of Religious Affairs has also published a *Pedoman Tehnik Rukyat* (I., Guide for *Rukyat* Techniques).[20] This guide provides practical instructions concerning almost everything that is related to *rukyatul hilal*, ranging from questions concerning the designation of a suitable place for the endeavor and the synchronizing of watches (through Indonesian governmental TV or radio), to how Jakarta should be informed about one's findings. I will refrain from discussing this guide any further here; suffice it to mention its existence.

Different dates for the commencement of Ramadan 1422 AH

Now let us return to mid-November 2001 Yogyakarta. In my *kampung*, the preparations for the fast had already went on for several weeks, and a special Ramadan committee (I. *panitia Ramadhan*) had been formed. Everybody knew that the fast would begin—*insya Allah*, God willingly—on either Friday or Saturday, but as we drew closer to the end of that week, people began

[19] *Departemen Agama* 1999/2000.
[20] *Departemen Agama* 1994/1995.

to feel ill at ease. Before long, all of us understood that parts of the Muslim community would fast on Friday, whereas other would wait until Saturday. Newspapers and TV-stations soon also declared this, and various *ulama* and public figures made their appearances in the media and explained how they hoped that this condition not would cause unease, let alone unrest. They also made repeated attempts of explaining why the *umat* not would act in unity in this matter, but these seeds did not fall in fertile soil. In fact, most of the ('ordinary') people I have talked to in Indonesia on this matter have had difficulties in explaining how it can be that members of the Indonesian Muslim community differ in respect to their understanding of the commencement of the new month. More common is it just to hear that "members of NU are a bit odd and old-fashioned" or that "Muhammadiyah always has gone its own way," depending on the position of the informer. Not few have also confused *rukyat* with *hisab*, and NU's and Muhammadiyah's respective relations to these concepts. When confronted with the question why they followed either *hisab* or *rukyat*, most Javanese have expressed—directly or indirectly—that this is not what they follow; they follow either NU or Muhammadiyah. They have, so to say, already put trust in either of these organizations (though not necessarily being members of them), and need consequently not involve themselves actively in all of their decisions; suffice it to follow them.

The mosque in my *kampung* was, like the vast majority of mosques in Yogyakarta, modernist in its orientation. Not all of the inhabitants in the block adhered to a modernist way of practicing their religion, however. After *maghrib* prayers on Thursday this year, some discussions consequently arose. There was still no decision from the *Badan Hisab-Rukyat* or *Departemen Agama*, but Muhammadiyah had already issued its decree saying that 1 Ramadan 1422 would correspond to (Friday) November 16. Not few were thus determined to begin their fast the following dawn. Others, however, remained indecisive, and awaited the governmental and NU decisions. After the *isya* prayers, it was already known that none of all the observation posts and organizations in the country had been able to physically spot the new moon, whereas the government suggested that the fast should begin on Saturday. Some then chose to follow the governmental directives—a few with the reason they were employed in the state bureaucracy and wanted to show their loyalty to the sitting government (!)—, whereas other, a majority in my *kampung*, still chose to stick to their initial plans, and thus prepared themselves for beginning the fast a few hours later. This was most manifestly done by the performance of the supererogatory *tarawih* prayers in the mosque, which were well attended.

The following morning some of us were fasting, whereas others were not. The Minister of Religion and other public figures repeatedly assured that the existence of multiple opinions and a variety of practices are signs of God's grace and an exemplification of God's way (I. *sunnatullah*). These words of wisdom left many Javanese Muslims confused; how could a situation that so clearly divided the Islamic *umat*, they asked, be a sign of God's

grace? And how could it be part of God's habits to spread schisms among His believers? And, more importantly perhaps, how could the Minister of Religion ignore all this?

As this was a Friday, the whole (male) community in the block was summoned to the mosque at noon. The *imam* this day was the man that acted *imam* most of the time in this mosque, and was thus well-known by the congregation. He was an employee of the Office for Religious Affairs (I. *Kantor Urusan Agama*) in Yogyakarta, and also a member of the local branch of Muhammadiyah. As a result of this combination, he was familiar both with the governmental attitudes towards the fixing of the dates of the new moons, as well as with the more modernist equivalents, and could speak to the congregation from both sides of the 'conflict.' He thus took the opportunity to dwell on the subject of moon dating this Friday, and explained in detail the various methods and their theological foundations and arguments. He also made clear exactly what had happened the night before in connection to the governmental 'spotting-sessions'—one of which he himself had attended—and declared that the new moon indeed had not been seen. He drew no determining conclusions in his sermon, but rather explained the various standpoints to the best of his ability and let members of the congregation decide for themselves what way they wanted to follow. He did not reveal his own inclination in the matter. (I later found out that he had fasted during that Friday, and that he thus followed his modernist personal convictions rather than the ideas of his employer.) During the half hour the sermon lasted, frictions seemed distant and members of the congregation were often seen nodding in agreement. Once the two *raka'at* (I., prayer cycles) of the Friday prayer were over, however, tensions immediately made their appearances: while some people pondered on what they should do for another six hours before the time of breaking the fast made itself present, others made loud lunch plans and ventilated their difficulties in choosing between fried rice and lamb skewers.

In my *kampung* (this year, at least) the problems connected to the 'correct' commencement of the month of fasting did not result in either open clashes or heated debates between the two groups. There were numerous discussions within the various groups, however. Among the modernists, one asked how anyone could discard the exact mathematical calculations that showed that this Friday indeed constituted the first of Ramadan. With 'scientific proof' in hand, the motives and sincerity of the traditionalists were questioned, while their backwardness was confirmed and enlarged. Few of the modernists passed any sentences, however, on the traditionalists—something which could have rendered the fast invalid—but a friend of mine expressed his conviction that they by not fasting on this day committed a sin. Mathematical and scientific exactness was again referred to. Among the traditionalists, on the other hand, it was first and foremost the theological validity of the modernist arguments that was questioned, and one wondered how the modernists could 'ignore' such obvious prophetic statements that the *hadits* literature offers. As far as the *hisab* method concerns, the traditionalists I spoke to

were only in favor of it as a means of predicting and verifying the necessary physical sighting. Calculation of the position of the moon was thus reduced to a tool in the service of the *rukyat* teams.

Though devoid of any serious clashes between proponents of the two different methods of determining the presence of the new moon, many Javanese felt that this situation disturbed the holiness (I. *kesucian*) of the month. What should have been a manifestation of Muslim unity both on a worldwide level and on a national equivalent, had to commence in disunity. As a consequence, the perceived strength of the *umat*—both the global and the local—was thus seriously flawed by this dissonance of opinions. Some of my friends, who actually had no problems with the situation in regard to their religious convictions, expressed their worries of what this condition would signal to the non-Muslim world. (I reassured them that the majority of non-Muslims living in non majority Muslim countries did not even know that Ramadan was about to commence.)

Most years there need not be any confusion concerning the 'correct' instigation of the month of fasting, however. In late 2002, for example, no problems arose in regard to the dating of Ramadan 1423 A.H. The government was in full agreement with both modernist and traditionalist organizations even before the actual *rukyat* that the fast should begin on November 6th, since it already had been calculated that the new moon's height should be more than six degrees on the fifth of November.[21] And indeed, of the 331 Islamic courts that carried out *rukyatul hilal* sessions on this Tuesday, 27 reported to the Department of Religious Affairs in Jakarta, and of them two had been able to physically spot the new moon.[22] With high hopes that this condition would be the subject of the Friday sermon prior to the fast in my *kampung* mosque in Blora, I was rather disappointed when the impending fast was not mentioned at all. Instead, we had to listen to a sermon depicting the triple danger of globalism, secularization, and (the lack of) Western morality.

NYEKAR: VISITING GRAVES

As we saw above, many Javanese Muslims have performed pilgrimage (I. *ziarah*) to one of the graves of the *Wali Sanga*, or to other local respected figures. The graves of renowned sultans and kings are frequently visited, and the idea of sacred graves (J. *pepundhen*) holds a prominent position in the minds of the Javanese. Not all parts of the *umat* are overly enthusiastic about this practice, however: Sufis and traditionalists are generally in favor of the concept, whereas repeated criticism is heard from the modernist camp. But a

[21] *Media Indonesia* 2002-11-05, *Kompas* 2002-10-26, *Kompas* 2002-11-05a, *Suara Merdeka* 2002-11-04a, *Suara Merdeka* 2002-11-05a.
[22] *Kompas* 2002-11-06a, *Suara Merdeka* 2002-11-06a.

modernist is not by definition against the performance of pilgrimages of all kinds, and neither is a traditionalist bound to be a proponent of it. As discussed elsewhere, it is the intent of the pilgrim that correctly situates the practice on a scale ranging from *mandub* (I., recommended) to *haram* (I., forbidden),[23] and we can thus find both Sufi disdain and modernist reverence for it.

In Java it is relatively common to *nyekar* (J., visit graves)[24] during the month of *Ruwah*, i.e., the month proceeding the month of fasting, *Pasa*. It is not primarily the graves of 'saints' or other 'holy' persons that are the objects of this activity, but rather those of one's own deceased relatives.[25] *Nyekar* is a verb derived from the noun *sekar*, meaning flower, and the practice thus at times involves the placing of flowers on the graves of the deceased, but this is not a necessity in contemporary Java. Neither is it a necessity (any more) to burn incense at this moment. What is bound to be involved, on the other hand, is the tidying up of the grave[26] and the uttering of various supplications (J. *donga*). The importance attached to these supplications is confirmed by the fact that the whole ritual frequently is referred to as *ngirim donga* (J., sending prayers). For this activity, one can ask a religious official, *modin* (J., from A. *muʾadhdhin*) or any other *santri* present (they usually are present at the right time and at the right place) for help in exchange of a small amount of money, should one regard oneself unable or insufficiently capable of reciting the needed supplications.

To *nyekar* is generally not disapproved of by modernists if the ultimate goal of it is to remind oneself of one's own forthcoming death, or at times even to pray for the deceased (with reference to QS 59:10). Some modernists argue that it is superfluous to go the graveyard for this, however, since prayer for the deceased may be uttered anywhere, and the presence of a graveyard in no way is a prerequisite for remembering death. Contemplation in a mosque thus appears to be a sound alternative for many modernists. No support whatsoever is to be expected from the modernists if the practice of *nyekar* involves asking for intercession on behalf of the deceased, or the asking of *pangestu* (J., blessings) from the deceased on the Other Side. Instead, they will probably be quick to denounce it as *haram* or *syirk*, should that be the case. Many traditionalists and mystics, on the other hand, see in these latter practices a very important aspect of *nyekar*, and argue that communication in

[23] Only the pilgrimage to Mecca is *wajib* (I., obligatory) for Muslims, should the circumstances permit it.

[24] Other terms, such as *ziarah*, *ziarah kubur*, and *sowan* (J., pay a visit), are also used to designate this practice. *Nyadran* (J.) too is occasionally employed, but as it has a double meaning, I have not made usage of it here.

[25] To be fair, pilgrimage to the graves of the *Wali Sanga* increase before and during Ramadan, as does pilgrimage to, for example, the grave of the country's first President, Soekarno, in Blitar, East Java.

[26] At times, the whole graveyard is collectively cleaned up (I. *bersih kubur*) by the people living in its vicinity, in order to have it look good before all the pilgrims come in *Ruwah*. See *Suara Merdeka* 2002-10-11.

various forms between the now living and the deceased not only is possible but also something worth striving for. In essence, the issue at stake in the debates of the position of *nyekar* among traditionalists and modernists is that of the location of the souls of the deceased, and the possibility to communicate with them. As Woodward has observed, Javanese—like other Muslims—have a slightly ambiguous attitude towards the former problem, to which they often cannot give a straightforward answer.[27] Some argue that the souls depart to one of the seven heavens at death; others say that it lingers on near the grave; and others yet have different opinions. Characteristic for the traditionalists is the belief that communication with the already departed is possible, whereas modernists generally are critical of any effort of communicating with the dead. As such, they may ask rhetorical questions concerning the ability of the dead to hear the living, and, even if they could hear them, what use it would be to them.[28]

The idea of *nyekar* just prior to Ramadan is rooted in the conception that one should enter the holy month in a state of purity, and ease the burden of one's deceased relatives by means of prayers. In other words, one should attempt to be forgiven by family and friends—both living and dead—ahead of the first of *Pasa.*[29] Ramadan and some weeks before it is also a time in which many people more than usual ponder upon religious issues, and thus on the fates of departed relatives.

Generally, *nyekar* is done not alone but together with other—still living—relatives. Most common is it that a couple (man and wife) visits the graves of their parents and parents-in-law respectively, and sometimes their children (i.e. the grandchildren of the deceased) come along. Any time during the day is fine for *nyekar*, though there seems to be a concentration of people in the afternoon.[30] The event does not take long; fifteen minutes is often enough. After the grave has been cleaned and old leafs and other filth has been thrown away, those wishing to place flowers on the grave do so, whereas the others proceed directly to the recitation of various supplications and/or selected portions of the Koran. (For those unable of this, as has been alluded to above, 'professionals' are usually present and ever-ready to provide their services for a small amount of money.) Recited at this moment are usually supplications asking for the deceased soul to be forgiven and given entrance to Paradise, together with *Surat Yaa Siin* (QS 36)[31] and perhaps some other shorter Koranic chapters, or parts of them. Added to this is often the pilgrim's own wish to have his—conscious or unconscious—

[27] Woodward 1989174ff. Cf. Bowen 1993: 251ff.
[28] Bowen 1993: 251.
[29] Note, however, that this is but one reason to *nyekar*. Cf. Koentjaraningrat 1985b: 365f.
[30] Nighlty sessions are possible too. Although I have not witnessed it myself, there are also those who perform *traweh* prayers in the graveyards during Ramadan. See *Media Indonesia* 2002-11-25.
[31] *Sūratu yā sīn* (A.) is often recited at occasions like these since it deals with, amongst other things, questions pertaining to the Resurrection and promises of Paradise.

wrongdoings towards the deceased forgiven. This would also be the time to present more personal wishes—including success in business, safety during long travels, and a healthy long life—but wishes like these are, as stated above, appreciated in different ways among members of the Javanese Muslim community.

RUWAHAN: A PRE-RAMADANIC *SLAMETAN*

"At the center of the whole Javanese religious system lies a simple, formal, undramatic, almost furtive, little ritual: the *slametan*." Ever since Clifford Geertz wrote that in his *The Religion of Java*,[32] this ritual has been discussed in numerous studies of Javanese religion and Islam in Java. Nevertheless, it is also true, as Beatty has observed, that there exists very few detailed descriptions of the ritual.[33] Furthermore, there exists no survey of all the proposed theories and speculations concerning the *slametan*, although an Indonesian scholar recently has made an initial attempt of this.[34] What we have then is a handful of descriptions of the ritual,[35] infinite references to it, and a few contrasting understandings of its nature.

In essence, the *slametan* is a ritual[36] that can be staged at various occasions in order to restore, secure, or simply enjoy the state of *slamet* (J.). This concept has been the subject of various translations and interpretations,[37] and defies simple rendering into English: tranquility, serenity, and peacefulness are some of the words that come to mind, though neither of them are wholly accurate. Its linguistic origin is to be found in the Arabic root *s-l-m*—from which words such as *islām*, *salām*, and *muslim* are derived—but has come to encompass specific Javanese values.

As already mentioned, a *slametan* can be organized at an assortment of moments, and Geertz has divided these moments into four "main types":

> (1) those centering around the crises of life—birth, circumcision, marriage, and death; (2) those associated with the Moslem ceremonial calendar—the birth of the Prophet, the ending of the Fast, the Day of Sacrifice, and the like; (3) that concerned with the social integration of the village, the *bersih desa*...; and (4) those intermittent *slametans* held at irregular intervals and depending upon unusual occurrences—departing for a long trip, changing one's place of residence, taking a new personal name, illness, sorcery, and so forth.[38]

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[32] Geertz 1960: 11.
[33] Beatty1999: 27f.
[34] Hilmy 1998.
[35] See primarily Beatty 1996, Beatty 1999: 25-50, Bowen 1993: 229-250, Geertz 1960: 11-15, 30-85, Hefner 1985: 104-110, Hilmy 1998, Koentjaraningrat 1985b: 346-365, Woodward 1988, Woodward 1989.
[36] Rather frequently, the *slametan* is referred to as a "ritual meal," but this is a misleading designation as the meal itself in no ways is ritualized.
[37] See Woodward 1988: 66f.
[38] Geertz 1960: 30.

Thus, similar—but not identical—rituals are performed at the time a woman enters her seventh month of pregnancy (J. *mitoni*), a boy is circumcised (J. *sunatan*), the prophet Muhammad's birthday is celebrated (J. *maulud*), a man recovers from an illness, or a family sets out for a journey to neighboring Bali. To anticipate a bit, these rituals all involve the gathering of the male members of a neighborhood shortly after the *maghrib* prayers at the front verandah of the home of the sponsor; the statement of the ritual's intent (J. *ujub*); the recitation of various *donga* (J., supplications) accompanied by approving *amin* (J., amen) by the congregation; and, finally, the distribution of the—by the supplications newly blessed—food among the participants.[39] A regular *slametan* (in Blora, at least) is over within ten or fifteen minutes.[40]

This "undramatic, almost furtive, little ritual" has caused debate among scholars of Islam in Java. What these scholars agree on, is that the *slametan* is of immediate importance to the religious lives of the Javanese (and of other Indonesians; Bowen's work is focused on the Gayo in northern Sumatra), and that Javanese religiosity cannot be explained or understood without a correct understanding of it. There is further agreement on the core ingredients of the ritual, which are the *ujub*, the *donga*, and the food itself. (Which of these is most important is a disputed question, however.) As for the nature or character of the ritual—and more specifically, its 'Islamic-ness'—, opinions diverge: Geertz situated this ritual in an animistic or Hindu-Buddhist context, Woodward interpreted it in the light of 'orthodox' Sufism, whereas it fell on Hilmy to try to reconcile these two standpoints. A bit more carefully, Beatty argued for the "mulitvocality of ritual symbols" in his study of the *slametan* (and hence the multiple interpretations of the ritual by the Javanese themselves), something which both Bowen and Hefner had done previously.[41]

As we saw in a previous chapter above, Geertz's understanding of Javanese Islam was prevailing and taken at face value for several decades before challenging voices were raised by Hefner, Woodward, Roff, Bowen, and others.[42] Consequently, the general opinion concerning the *slametan* was for long in line with that of Geertz's. It was only with the general shift of perspectives in research on religion in Java (alluded to above) that this understanding of the *slametan* began to be questioned and criticized. Mark Woodward was probably the most vocal critic. By studying the Koran, the *aḥādīth*, and other local Muslim traditions, he was able to show that the *slametan* is a

[39] This 'visible' part of the *slametan* is dominated by males, but as will be discussed later, women play an important role in certain aspects of the ritual.
[40] Certain *slametan* are, however, followed by extensive *zikir* sessions and may last several hours.
[41] Beatty 1999: 26, Bowen 1993: 229ff, Hefner 1985: 108. Note that chapter two ("The slametan: agreeing to differ") in Beatty's *Varieties of Javanese Religion: An Anthropological Account* is a (very) slightly revised version of his article published a few years earlier (Beatty 1996). References here are to Beatty 1999.
[42] For complete references, see the chapter two above.

"locally defined Muslim rite"[43] that has its equivalents in other parts of the Muslim world. In doing this he drew attention to, amongst other things, a set of traditions of the prophet that include ingestion and distribution of blessed food, the Islamic notion of *sedekah* (I., charity, A. *ṣadaqah*), and the similarity of the *ujub* and the widely practiced Islamic *nīyah* (A., intent) before any act of *ʿibādah* (A., act of devotion, worship). In addition he also emphasized the Islamic character of the humility the sponsor of a *slametan* shows to his guests, and the inescapable Islamic nature of the *donga* (J., supplication, A. *duʿāʾ*).[44] In line with the arguments in his later monograph,[45] Woodward could thus state that what is at stake in the Javanese religious landscape is not an antagonism between Muslims and Hindu-Buddhists-cum-animists, but rather a debate "between groups committed to distinct modes of Muslim piety."[46] The *slametan*, then, is an Islamic ritual.

Andrew Beatty has also criticized Geertz's views of the *slametan*—without, however, totally embracing the arguments of Woodward. As already alluded to, Beatty has drawn attention to the "ordered ambiguity" the *slametan* reveals, and argued—by citing Humphrey and Laidlaw—that Javanese Muslims present at any one *slametan* may draw their own distinct conclusions and situate the ritual in their own system of religious inclinations.[47] *Slametan* does thus not 'belong' to a certain group of Javanese Muslims.[48] Beatty's critique of Woodward is focused on the fact that he—unlike Woodward—could not find any Javanese Muslims during his fieldwork in eastern Java who regarded the *slametan* to be Islamic. It might be, he argues, that previous anthropologists have been "misled by a narrowly legalistic definition of Islam," as Woodward and others have proposed, "but then so has the Javanese" themselves.[49] (We will return to this topic soon enough.) Beatty has also criticized Woodward for his recalling of various traditions of the prophet concerning humility, blessing, almsgiving, and invitations to the poor, and argued that these features are lacking in Banyuwangi and "weakly attested elsewhere."[50] (To this topic too will we have reason to return.)

Let us now return to the lives of Javanese Muslims in the month of *Ruwah.* As discussed above, the essence of the practice of *nyekar* is to *ngirim donga* (J., send prayers) to the souls of the deceased, and in the month of *Ruwah*, one also has the possibility to do this by means of a special *slametan* called *ruwahan*. (As mentioned above, the eighth month of the Javanese calendar derives its name from the Arabic word for soul, *rūḥ*, pl. *arwāḥ*.) The

[43] Woodward 1988: 54.
[44] Woodward 1988.
[45] Woodward 1989.
[46] Woodward 1988: 86. Woodward also criticized Geertz for associating the *slametan* with rural religion (1988: 66).
[47] Beatty 1999: 26f., with reference to Humphrey & Laidlaw 1994: 202ff.
[48] Cf. Bowen 1993: 229.
[49] Beatty 1999: 47.
[50] Beatty 1999: 48.

primary goal of holding a *ruwahan* is thus to pray for the deceased (especially one's parents), but there is also the additional goal of settling one's relations with one's neighbors prior to the commencement of Ramadan in order to be able to perform the fast without (emotional) disturbances. Furthermore, to hold a *ruwahan* is to welcome (J. *nyambut*) the noble guest Ramadan constitutes.

Ruwahan food boxes to be filled with foodstuff.

In Blora, people do not generally refer to this ritual by the word *slametan* (although everyone is familiar with it) but rather use the word *bancakan* (J.) or *amin-amin* (J.). The latter term is derived from the frequent *amin* uttered by the whole congregation during the recitation of the *donga*, whereas the origin of the former is to be found in the name for the boxes of plaited bamboo, the *bancak*, that at times are used as containers for the food. It is also customary to name the *slametan/bancakan* just by the specific type of ritual that is at stake (i.e. "*Pak* Soesro is staging a *ruwahan* tonight"). As Geertz has observed, Javanese Muslims organize *slametan* at various and numerous occasions, and the Blorans are no exception in this respect, although their *bancakan* seem to differ slightly from the ones described elsewhere. Noteworthy is it also that this ritual, the *bancakan*, at times only is part of a larger complex of activities. During *Ruwah* in 2002, for example, I was invited to a *bancakan* in a neighboring house in Blora, which was held as a sign of thanksgiving (I. *tanda syukur*) for the homecoming of a son from a war torn area of Indonesia as part of his military service. This *bancakan*, simply named *syukuran*, was only the beginning of something larger that was to culminate later that night (or rather, early next morning) in a performance

of a *barongan*, a popular Javanese (and Balinese) drama (with possibilities of multiple interpretations).[51]

The other way around, it is also possible that the *bancakan* is the culmination of something that has been going on the entire day. Such was the case, for example, when I myself staged a *bancakan* for my newborn daughter (at the time four months old). This was a *kekahan* (J., A. *ʿaqīqah*) which had 'begun' already at 4.30 a.m. with the slaughtering of a goat, and continued throughout the day with the skinning of the animal, the cooking of its meat, and the burial of its fur and bones. It was only later that evening, shortly after *maghrib* prayers, that the ritual was wrapped up in a *bancakan* in which the newly cooked meat was consumed. Before the actual staging of this *kekah* someone mentioned that it might be smart to make this ritual a *ruwahan* at the same time (as it happened to be the month of *Ruwah*), but this met with immediate and negative reactions from most of those present. It would really be misfortunate, they argued simultaneously, to have a *bancakan* to include both rituals for the living and for the dead—all the more so since a newborn was involved! The idea was discarded.

A *bancakan* does not begin with the summoning of the neighboring men to the house of the sponsor, as is commonly believed, but rather a few days or even weeks before that—and at this time, the ritual is in the hands of the women. From the decision to have a *bancakan* to the actual assembling of the neighboring men at the front verandah, ritual preparations are in the hands of the women. This includes not only the culturally felt need and subsequent decision to hold a ritual, but also the decision on exactly who is to be sent a box of *bancakan* food, the buying of foodstuff and paper boxes, the preparation of the food, the buying of cigarettes, the cooking of tea, and so on. It is thus wrong to assume that a *bancakan* is solely a male ritual. As the amount of food to be cooked is quite substantial, the female ritual sponsor is usually helped by neighboring women in this great task, and sometimes even 'professional' help is hired. Cooking generally starts on the morning of the *bancakan*, although preparations perhaps already were begun the day before that. The first time I witnessed these events I was struck by the organization of the whole event: it was as if everybody knew exactly what to do and when. Later I learned that this was actually the case: the women indeed knew what to do and when to do it, since they did it so often. Thus, it was nothing but natural that *Mbah* Tresno took care of the cooking of the rice, *Bu* Suparlan chopped the onions, and *Bu* Wiwit managed the cookies. After all, this was the way in it was done several times a month.

The coming together of the women of a neighborhood like this is an important social event, and it could even be said that this 'female part' of the ritual ensures a state of *slamet* too (among the women). Men are never active in the ritual preparations, and neither is their help sought for. My status as a Western 'familiar stranger' has, however, let me partake in these preparations

[51] See Beatty 1999: 59ff. for a discussion of the *barong* in Banyuwangi.

on a few occasions. I have thus learned that the chopping of chilies is mixed with discussions of local events; the cooking of chicken mixed with gossips of this-and-that; and the kneading of the dough mixed with a passive watching of an Indian musical on TV. It is a great time for social interaction, but it is exclusively female in character.

The food cooked for a *bancakan* has been the subject of some discussions.[52] The Bloran *bancakan* rarely or never contains such elaborate food symbolism as reported from other areas of Java, and as for the food of the *ruwahan* there is only one prerequisite: the *apem* (J.) cakes. These are rice flour cakes that are known throughout large parts of South- and Southeast Asia. Whereas they are a "popular snack" in South India and Malaya, they have been largely reduced to a ritual foodstuff in Java, and are intimately connected to death and the dead. As a consequence, some elderly Javanese refuse to eat them.[53] Nevertheless, a few cookie peddlers include them in their regular repertoire of sweets (which is a good thing, since they are rather delicious). I am yet to find a bearing explanation for this felt connection between *apem* and death.

A typical *ruwahan* food box to be distributed.

Apart from the *apem* cakes then, the choice of food for the *ruwahan* knows no other limits, more than those of regular Javanese decency and taste, of course. A regular box—nowadays paper boxes bought in the market are preferred, at the cost of banana leaves and the plaited bamboo boxes, the *bancak*, mentioned above—may thus consist of the following (as it did, during a *ruwahan* in 2002): a large portion of rice, a small piece of *rendang* (I.,

[52] See for example Geertz 1960: 39f., Beatty 1999: 31, 40, Woodward 1988: 72ff.
[53] Woodward 1988: 74.

meat cooked in spices and coconut milk), some hot potatoes, noodles, fried *tempe* (I., fermented soybean cakes), a boiled egg, and some *apem* cakes. Any of these except the rice and the *apem* are replaceable by other foodstuff, including chicken, fried *tahu* (I., soybean curd), mixed vegetables, fried fish, and so forth. There are no 'hidden meanings' in this food, according to Muslims in Blora; an egg is just an egg, and not a symbol of the universe, or something else.[54]

Cooking for a *ruwahan*.

Sometime during the afternoon, all the food has been cooked and placed in paper boxes, and it is time for the males to start acting. Though the vast majority of the boxes are distributed (and perhaps consumed) during the ritual itself, some of them have been marked with letters or names, and it now falls on the men—usually the younger generation—to deliver these boxes to the right addresses before *maghrib* prayers. Receiving afternoon boxes are relatives and friends that do not live in the immediate neighborhood but that the sponsors of the ritual feel obliged to include in the ritual.[55] And, indeed, feelings of obligation are involved in this process; women keep a careful record of who invites them to *bancakan* or sends them food boxes, and it is generally felt that an invitation or a food box has to be returned by the same measure. In addition to this, the practice of sending food boxes is also a way

[54] A psychoanalytical analysis would (perhaps) not agree with this, regardless of what the Javanese themselves say.

[55] Those women helping out with the preparation of the *bancakan* food generally also receive some food during the afternoon, although their men most probably will be present at the actual ritual later that night. This food is not wrapped up in a box, but rather just laid on a plate that is expected to be returned the following day.

of telling more geographically distant friends and relatives about what is going on in the homes of the ritual sponsors (i.e., a marriage, a circumcision, a recovering, etc.).

This afternoon time is also the time for the male part of the family (sometime helped by the women) to clean up the *ruang tamu* (I., 'guest-room'; a room at the front of every Javanese house in which guests are received and deemed to spend their entire visit, unless they are very close relatives or friends), and spread out the special *bancakan* carpets for convenient sitting. (All guests sit on the floor, so as to emphasize the equality of those assembled and avoid hierarchical questions. In addition, most houses would not be able to present the number of chairs required for the occasion.) Cigarettes are placed in a couple of glasses on the carpet together with some ash trays—virtually all male Javanese smoke—, and in the middle of the room the packed and sealed food boxes are placed. Then, shortly before the *maghrib* prayers, someone (usually a young male) is given the task of informing the neighbors that there is going to be a *bancakan* just after sunset. There is thus very little time elapsing from the invitations to the actual ritual, but Javanese people always tend to be close to home during this time (as work is over for most of them, and the *maghrib* prayers are to be performed), and attendance at the rituals is generally high. Of course, most people in the neighborhood are also aware of the impending event.

Shortly after *maghrib* prayers, the *modin* (J.) shows up at the front porch. A *modin* in Java—whose title is derived from the Arabic for 'announcer of prayers,' *muʾadhdhin*; in English rendered as 'muezzin'—is usually an elderly man known for his piety and/or knowledge of Islam and Arabic, and acts as a kind of Islamic religious functionary. In my *kampung* in Blora, this is an old, skinny and few-toothed traditionalist gentleman, who never fails to make his entrance in his worn out *sarung* and *peci*. He is known to be a pious man (he occasionally acts as *imam* in the neighborhood *musholla*), and is familiar with a wide range of Arabic *donga* recited for different purposes. Consequently, he is frequently summoned by families sponsoring an *amin-amin*; indeed, he could be said to have the sole right for this activity in this specific neighborhood. As he arrives, he is generally reminded of the type of *bancakan* that is to be performed, and the names of those involved. This is information he already has received a couple of days earlier when he first was contracted for the job, but when it comes to names and other details, his memory often fails him. With a refreshed memory he then sits down at the furthest end of the room (that which is closest to the rest of the house), lights a clove-spiced cigarette and awaits the others to come. He is accompanied only by the male sponsor at this time, and the two might exchange some polite phrases—an activity most Javanese master with sophistication.

One by one, then, the male members of the neighboring community make their appearances at the location, most of them wearing *peci*, some of them *sarung* too. They enter the *ruang tamu* while uttering the Islamic greet-

ing (I. *salam*) or just by bowing and nodding politely, before they take their randomly selected seats at the floor. As they sit down, they greet (by handshake) those who sit in their vicinities, and start to exchange polite phrases with them. Some—most, actually—provide themselves with cigarettes, and the room is soon filled with thick clove smoke and several half-whispering conversations. (This pre-*bancakan* small talk at times develops into regular questionings about Swedish farmers, Western morality, and atheism, but this is by no means standard procedure.)

When it is felt that everyone has arrived, the *modin*—after having been given a hint by the host—addresses the assembly by uttering the *salam* in Arabic before he continues in his most polite (high) Javanese. Contrary thus to reports of *slametan* in other areas of Java, it is not the sponsor that does this; instead, he remains quiet during the entire ritual (though he might need to utter some discreet reminders ot the *modin*). This initial speech is referred to as the *ujub* in Javanese—a term derived from the Arabic *ījāb*, meaning 'offer.'[56] The *ujub* I have witnessed in Blora—none of which I have recorded due to a felt unease of adding a tape recorder to the food to be blessed—have all been very short, merely welcoming the guests, apologizing for the inadequacy of the food offered, stating the specific intent of the ritual, and conveying more general reasons of throwing a *bancakan*.[57] The specific intent of a *ruwahan* may thus be to *ngirim donga* (J., send prayers) to the deceased (who are mentioned by name), whereas the general reason is to restore, secure, and enjoy the state of *slamet*.[58] As simple as it may seem, Woodward has argued that this *ujub* has at least five theologically motivated purposes:

> (1) to link an elaborate feast with the simple ritual meals at which Muhammad officiated; (2) to define the community to whom blessing will be imparted; (3) to specify saints and other beings to whom food and prayers are dedicated; (4) to establish the good intentions of the host; and (5) to establish his humility.[59]

During the *ujub*, those present sit motionless with their eyes fixed on the carpet in front of them, and it is clearly felt that this is a crucial part of the ritual. When the *modin* feels that he has said everything that need to be said in his *ujub*, he concludes it by reciting half-silently some praises of Muhammad (I. *salawat*, A. *ṣalawāt*) in Arabic, before suddenly announcing with a clear voice: "*Alfatekah!*" (J., A. *al-fātiḥah*), meaning that the whole assembly

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[56] 'Offer' here in the meaning that one part 'offers' something to a fellow. The term is often used in this sense together with that of *qabūl* (A.), which bears the meaning of 'acceptance.' See Schacht's articles on *Īdjāb* and *Bayʿ* in *Encyclopeadia of Islam* (2nd ed.) (Schacht 1960, and Schacht 1971b). In Java, *ijab kabul* is often used to refer to marriage, which is—in essence—an 'offer' and an 'acceptance.'

[57] For complete transliterations of *ujub*, see Geertz 1960: 41 and Beatty 1999: 31f. Note, however, that the elaborateness that characterizes these *ujub* is not present in their Bloran equivalents.

[58] See Geertz 1960: 11f., for a discussion of specific and general reasons of throwing a *slametan*.

[59] Woodward 1988: 74f.

is to recite, mumbling for themselves, the first verse of the Koran three times. This done, the *modin* raises both his hands palms facing upwards—and the congregation is quick to follow—and starts to recite an extended Arabic supplication, carefully chosen to suite the specific occasion. As the supplication is recited by the *modin*, members of the convention punctuate it by frequent uttered *amin*, and when the *modin* is done, they all rub their palms to their faces so as to absorb the *berkat* (J., A. *barakah*) the supplication allegedly has generated.

Before—at times after, actually—the food is divided, members of the get-together are asked to give their consent to the ritual, which they do by uttering loud *"Kabul!"* They thus 'accept' (A. *qabūl*) the 'offer' (A. *ījāb*) stated previously in the ritual, and may be said to be witnesses (J. *seksi*) to the event. The food boxes are then divided by one of the guests (neither the host nor the *modin* distribute the food), and when all have gotten their share, the party splits up after occasional handshakes, and the men return to their houses carrying a box of food. From other parts of Java it has been repeatedly reported that part (or all) of the food is consumed at the house of the host before the rest is brought home,[60] but this is only very rarely done in Blora. In fact, the food boxes are generally only opened in the homes of the guests themselves. The food box of the *modin* is often marked with a special sign as it contains a bit more food than the regular boxes as a sign of gratefulness from the host (at times the *modin* is lucky enough to receive two boxes), in addition to the ten or twenty thousand *rupiah* he receives. And as the *modin* wanders off to his home, the *bancakan* is over.

A *ruwahan* in Blora.

[60] Woodward 1988: 81, Beatty 1999: 32, Geertz 1960: 13. I once attended a death *slametan* in a remote village in the mountainous area of Temanggung, Central Java, and there all of the food was consumed during the ritual.

In the Bloran *bancakan* I have witnessed, there has been no usage of incense,[61] and neither have I ever heard someone argue that the souls of the deceased (relatives or saints) partake in the ritual meal by means of 'eating' the aroma of the foodstuff.[62] This latter fact is supported by the fact that the food boxes are closed during the entire ritual, and the foodstuff itself not mentioned by the *modin* or the host. Instead, my Bloran friends and 'informants' have stressed the importance of the *donga*, so as to ensure a state of *slamet*. There is further wide consensus that the food divided among those present at the ritual has been blessed. In the case of the *ruwahan*, a local *kyai*—*Pak* Hasan—told me that this ritual has the double boon of both spreading blessings (J. *berkat*) among those partaking in the ritual, as well as to convey prayers for the deceased. To 'send prayers' through a *ruwahan*, he said, is like sending a letter with complete address—it is bound to arrive (in time and at the right place). However, to pray for the deceased need not be limited to the month of *Ruwah*, *Pak* Hasan continued, but should be done throughout the year. Moreover, there is actually no need for such elaborate rituals as a *ruwahan* to do this, since it is possible to provide the deceased with supplications in solitude at home.

It seems to me that the *bancakan* is heavily influenced by Islam, and that animist or Hindu-Buddhist features are totally lacking.[63] Nevertheless, contrary to Woodward, I (as Beatty) have never heard any Javanese explicitly state that the *slametan* is an Islamic ritual. Once while walking to a *slametan* in my *kampung* I was joined by *Pak* Soleh, a middle-aged pious *haji*. Without me asking for it, he immediately gave his view on the ritual we were to attend: "There is no such thing as *bancakan* in Islam. It is not Islam. It is merely... eh, a Javanese tradition (J. *adat Jawa*)." When I have asked other Javanese Muslims for their opinions, I have met with similar statements. Everyone has stressed that the *slametan* is a Javanese ritual, but none has suggested that it should be animist, Hindu-Buddhist, or non-Islamic in any other way. (That there is no such thing as a *bancakan* "in Islam" means in the present context that Middle Eastern and/or prophetic Islam is/was devoid of it). Javanese and Indonesian Muslims are quite likely to make a (blurred) line of division between 'religion' (I. *agama*) and 'culture' (I. *kebudayaan*) or 'tradition' (I. *adat*). This division renders it possible even for very strict and pious Muslims to partake in certain rituals that may seem 'un-Islamic' by referring to them as 'simply tradition' or 'merely culture.' As long as one does not regard it to be *agama* (i.e. Islam), there should be no problems.

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[61] And this contrasts with reports from other areas of Java. Eg., Beatty 1999: 31, 36, Geertz 1960: 11, Hefner 1985: 108, Bowen 1993: 231.

[62] Geertz 1960: 15: Cf. Beatty 1999: 37.

[63] It is noteworthy, however, that Javanese Christians may throw *bancakan* too. Unfortunately, I have never attended one.

As I understand the Javanese *bancakan* (in its Bloran form) and as the Javanese seem to understand it themselves, this ritual consists of an Islamic essence and a Javanese container. In other words, the form the ritual takes is specifically Javanese, whereas its quintessence is in line with Islamic religious values. As such, the *slametan* may attract most Javanese people (due to its container), and even the more categorical modernists may find its (Islamic) essence so appealing that they feel no need to denounce it. (Furthermore, the container is 'just culture.') Of course, Javanese interpretations of the ritual are multiple. Supporting the Islamic character of the *ruwahan* are the *ujub* which can be regarded as an intent (A. *nīyah*); the blessings recited upon Muhammad (A. *ṣalawāt*); the supplication (A. *duʿāʾ*); and the idea of blessed food. Furthermore, humility in the host, a shared blessing, almsgiving, and invitations to the poor, are ideas that, contrasting with the arguments of Beatty,[64] not are "weakly attested" outside of Yogyakarta. On the contrary, these are essential ingredients in any one *bancakan* in Blora, and they are frequently alluded to by the participants in this ritual.

Let us return a short while to the *ruwahan* in Blora, and more specifically to *Pak Kyai* Hasan's view of it. *Kyai* Hasan is a man of very modest measures; he lives in a small and rudimentary house together with his wife and four children (and at times other relatives), and has no secure income (his wife makes some money selling foodstuff in the neighborhood). Whatever surplus he obtains is immediately spent on the *musholla* that makes up for the front part of his house, and he is a man known for his piety. While, during *Ruwah* in 2002, I had a talk with him, he repeatedly stressed the good and Islamic values of *ruwahan* rituals, although he acknowledged that he felt ill at ease watching the more affluent residents of the neighborhood throwing these *bancakan* as were they nothing but means of bragging about one's wealth. In the eyes of *Pak* Hasan, things had gone out of hands, and he reckoned that some people were more attracted to ideas of worldly prestige (J. *gengsi*) than to after worldly blessings (J. *berkat*). He also believed that several households in the area 'competed' in having this year's most elaborate *ruwahan*, something he saw as very misfortunate.[65] Pondering upon this condition, he concluded that it might be a good idea to organize a pre-Ramadanic mass ritual (J. *ruwahan massal*), and had a week or so earlier sent out a letter to households in his vicinity asking if there was any interest in partaking in such a ritual. Proudly he showed me the responses that had arrived at his house: almost all of those asked were eager to partake, and *Kyai* Hasan had already determined a date for the upcoming ritual and begun to make other preparations. Instead of every household having their own costly *ruwahan*, he argued, it is better to make a joint ritual at the *musholla*. In organizing this ritual, he decided that every family may deliver (anonymously, if they so wanted) their contributions of food at the *musholla* some time dur-

[64] Beatty 1999: 48.
[65] It is noteworthy that I only heard *Pak* Hasan make this comment or analysis.

ing the day, in order that everything be collectively consumed during the nightly ritual. The religious value of a ritual like this, *Pak* Hasan told me, is even greater than that of privately held *ruwahan*, and the reason for this is twofold. Firstly, Islam stresses the unity of the *umat* and emphasizes the importance of cooperation. Secondly, feelings of *gengsi* (J., prestige) will not be involved in such a mass ritual, since the food is delivered in secrecy—no one will know who left what food, and hopefully no one will be very interested in it anyway. I was myself not able to attend this mass ritual due to other ritual engagement that night, but *Pak* Hasan and several of those neighbors of his who were present described it as a success and expressed their willingness to arrange similar rituals in the future. According to the *kyai*, it had functioned just as a regular *ruwahan*, the only difference being that they arranged it collectively in the prayer house, instead of individually in the homes of the sponsors.

Finally, a few words on the time of the *ruwahan* may fittingly conclude this section. Naturally, the time of the *ruwahan* is delineated to the Javanese month of *Ruwah*, which corresponds to the Arabic *Shaʿbān*. Geertz has argued that it should be held during the last day of this month just prior to sunset[66]—thus marking the last legitimate daylight eating before the fast—, but this idea is not attested by my experience in either Blora or Yogyakarta. Instead, *ruwahan* are thrown some time during the last three weeks of the month, and then usually just *after* sunset. There is a concentration of *ruwahan* during the last four or five days of the month, when food boxes from various rituals provide whole families with sufficient amount of food for several days, but there seems to be no idea that it should be 'better' in any way to throw the ritual closer to the month of *Pasa.* It is just that many Javanese, like other people, tend to postpone their activities one more day if possible.

CLEANING UP THE NEIGHBORHOOD

As Ramadan draws close, discussions of public morality are bound to emerge in Java. Ramadan is a holy month (J. *wulan suci*)—indeed *the* holy month within the Islamic tradition—that needs to be respected (J. *diajeni*), and the level of tolerance towards perceived immoralities is consequently tangibly dropped during the month of fasting. Practices such as gambling, drinking, and prostitution suddenly become more disturbing than usual for parts of the Muslim community. Most eager to take action towards these perceived immoralities are the Muslim radicals, whereas for the liberals such actions may be even worse than the perceived immoralities were in the first place. Modernists, traditionalists, and the state bureaucracy are usually inclined to sup-

[66] Geertz 1960: 78.

port strong action towards this low level of public moral too, but they prefer to do so within the limits of the law.

The alleged need to 'clean up the neighborhood' is justified by several interrelated factors. First and foremost is the *ḥadīthic* material that repeatedly encourages the Muslim community to understand the Ramadanic fast in a wide sense; that is, not just to refrain from food, drinks, and sexual relations during daytime. In order to be able to do this, it is necessary that the environment is supportive. If entertainment spots are closed during the month of fasting, it is thus argued, confused souls will at least not be able to spend their time, energy, and money on immoralities—and encourage others to do that—and some might even find their way to the mosques and the nightly supererogatory prayers. The second factor is that most people employed in the entertainment business are Muslims, and Muslims should spend the month of fasting by performing obligatory and optional rituals, thus drawing closer to God. They should not be forced to spend their time in morally doubtful places, at the very least, and they should be able to celebrate *Lebaran* with their family. The third factor is constituted by the fact that Ramadan frequently is seen as a 'momentum.' Hence, Javanese Muslims regard the temporary curbing of the activities of various locations of entertainment during the month of *Pasa* as a start for something larger. In the long run, it is hoped that this short-term elimination of immoral entertainment will make those involved in it *insyaf* (I., aware, conscious) of their wrongdoings and misconduct.

These factors have had their political implications in contemporary Indonesia, where—with the implementation of regional autonomy—decisions concerning entertainment spots, prostitutes, and gambling lie in the hands of local politicians, thus assuring a multitude of different approaches to this 'problem.' In Yogyakarta, for example, Mayor Herry Zudianto issued a decree (I. *surat keputusan*) in *Ruwah* 2002 in which it was prescribed that various locations of entertainment (including discotheques, bars, karaoke restaurants, and fitness centers) had to close during the first and last week of Ramadan, and during the four first days of *Syawal*. In addition, the opening hours during the 'lawful' days of Ramadan were limited, and the serving of alcoholic drinks prohibited. Restaurants operating during daylight hours were requested to set up curtains, so as to minimize the risk of tempting fasting Muslims, and movie theaters were banned to show any pornographic material.[67] In Surabaya, East Java, the Mayor issued two decrees in 2002 that prohibited the opening of brothels (I. *Lokalisasi Pekerja Seks Komersial*) and other entertainment spots (I. *tempat hiburan*) during the whole month of fasting, a decision warmly welcomed by several Islamic organizations.[68] The local government in Semarang, Central Java, had similar plans, but had to

[67] *Jawa Pos*, 2002-10-20. Furthermore, the local Yogyakarta administration made plans for prohibiting all entertainment throughout Ramadan the following year.
[68] *Media Indonesia*, 2002-10-21a.

back and settle for a total closing of all entertainment spots during only five days (in the beginning and end of the month), whereas the opening hours were seriously decreased during the rest of the month.[69] In Jakarta, on the other hand, Muslim organizations were successful in persuading Governor Sutiyoso to issue a decree forbidding all activities of nightly entertainment spots during Ramadan, in order to "respect the Islamic community that performs the fast."[70]

In addition to these political decisions, the month of *Ruwah* also witnesses an increase in activities of the police. As an "anticipation of the month of fasting," the police in Ungaran, for example, detained no less than 55 prostitutes—and publicly degraded them together with a private TV-station—a couple of days before the commencement of the fast.[71] Similar events occurred in Tangerang, and, indeed, throughout Indonesia.[72] In Kudus, the police, together with local politicians and *ulama*, made a great get-together in the town square the day before the first of Ramadan, when they smashed thousands of bottles of alcohol (which they had collected during the last ten months!), and announced their coming operations directed towards prostitutes and gamblers too.[73]

These political decisions and actions meant to facilitate the successful performing of the month of Ramadan seem quite accommodating to the interests of the Muslim community. Not all parts of the latter were, however, satisfied with them, and Muslim radicals under the leadership of the Islamic Defenders' Front (*FPI, Front Pembela Islam*)—known to smash entertainment spots not only during Ramadan—made up their harshest critics. Thus, although Governor Sutiyoso in Jakarta had signed a decree prohibiting the operations of entertainment spots prior to Ramadan in 2002, FPI emphasized that they should not remain quiet during the month of fasting if they found any signs of open 'places of immoralities.' The decree in itself was seen as mere rhetoric (I. *retorika saja*), and one of the organization's leaders acknowledged in late October that their members were ready to check all Jakarta locations of entertainment during the initial days of Ramadan.[74] They were prepared to do this since similar governmental decrees had been issued previous years, but with little actual success. During these years, FPI had noted that much unlawful and immoral activity was going on behind closed doors in Jakarta, and that it was merely the front signs on night clubs and discotheques that were turned off.[75] Hence, open conflicts followed.

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[69] *Kompas*, 2002-10-29, *Suara Merdeka*, 2002-11-05b, *Suara Merdeka* 2002-11-06b.
[70] *Kompas*, 2002-10-24, *Jawa Pos*, 2002-10-28.
[71] *Suara Merdeka*, 2002-11-04b.
[72] *Media Indonesia*, 2002-10-21b.
[73] *Suara Merdeka*, 2002-11-06c.
[74] *Jawa Pos*, 2002-10-28. The local FPI branch in Surakarta made similar statements, and 'promised' they would take action, should the police be unable to uphold the law. See *Suara Merdeka*, 2002-11-01.
[75] Kurniawan 2001. Cf. Ridyasmara 2001.

It is not only radicals that are ready to take action against this alleged immorality—traditionalists, modernists, and Sufis are likewise fed up with their rituals being disturbed by the unrest gambling, prostitution, and drinking cause. Consequently, they too provide youths willing to extinguish these disconcerting elements, but they generally try to do this *together* with the local police. Nahdlatul Ulama in Pekalongan, for example, stated just prior to Ramadan in 2002 that they were ready to be involved in raids with the police "in order to wipe out acts of immorality,"[76] and the local branch of Abdurrahman Wahid's political party (PKB) in Demak made similar statements.[77] In the meantime, the Minister of Religious Affairs, Said Agil Husin Al Munawar, repeatedly stated that the holiness of the month of Ramadan should be guarded by the police, and not by small fractions of the Muslim community.[78] As it turned out, Ramadan 2002/1423 proved to be reasonably peaceful.

In Blora, the question of wiping out spots of entertainment has never attracted much attention from the residents due to the simple fact that there exist no such locations in this town. (The one cinema present in Blora is no real nest of immorality, and the largest Saturday night entertainment is to have a meal at one of the numerous tents at the town square while the kids ride plastic electrified cars.) Prostitution and gambling do occur, but hardly in any disturbing way. However, most of the Bloran Muslims I spoke to on the matter agreed with the general Indonesian sentiment that immoralities of various sorts have to be restricted during Ramadan, and preferably even wiped out and prohibited throughout the year. Nevertheless, a great majority of them also expressed reluctance towards the methods of the Muslim radicals they read about in the newspapers and watched on TV, and rather sided with the politicians and the police. To fast, perform the *sholat*, read the Koran, and pray during daytime, just to spend the nights by smashing night clubs, did not appeal to the Blorans I spoke with. Not few also expressed their sympathies with those who have their income from the entertainment sector, and who thus provide for their families with this money. What will happen with them and their families, one friend of mine asked, if the loose their incomes during Ramadan? Will not that mean that they will live during very hard conditions during the so-called blessed month (I. *bulan penuh berkah*)? And will not that mean that they will not be able to celebrate *Lebaran* at the end of the month? And indeed, these are the reasons various entertainment spots cannot be closed down without protests from those working there.[79]

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[76] *Suara Merdeka*, 2002-11-05c.

[77] *Suara Merdeka*, 2002-11-04c.

[78] *Kompas*, 2002-11-04. The local police in Semarang expressed similar hopes; see *Kompas*, 2002-11-05.

[79] Another reason to the frequent demonstrations is that employers in this business may easily demand that their employees engage in such demos; are they not willing to do that, they may be fired with immediate effect. Such was the case in one gambling nest in Yogyakarta prior to Ramadan in 2003.

As Ramadan is approaching, one could perhaps expect that Javanese Muslims should not occupy themselves by fasting in the month of *Ruwah*. Such is not the case, however, and people have different reasons for fasting during this month. Among the more popular reasons among women is to make up for the days they missed due to menstruation during last year's Ramadan. It has been reported from Morocco that Muslim women there prefer to make up for their missed days as soon as possible after Ramadan,[80] but Javanese Muslims are more inclined to follow the example set by the favorite wife of the Prophet, ᶜĀʾishah. It is reported in the literature that she used to fast in *Shaᶜbān* in order to make up for her missed days,[81] and Javanese women make occasional reference to this condition in explaining their fasting. Others—a majority, in fact—more bluntly state that their fasting in *Syaban* is caused by their laziness to perform it any sooner. Redeeming these days is in Java referred to by the expression *mbayar utang* (J.), which literally means 'repaying a debt,' and several women have likened the missed days to a temporary borrowing from God that needs to be returned before the commencement of the next Ramadan. Having had their entire menstruation cycle during Ramadan last year, some women may end up fasting for more than a week in *Ruwah*, thus being well-prepared when the actual month of fasting makes its appearance.[82] As fasting in non-Ramadanic months may be a little harder (due to environmental circumstances) than to perform the actual Ramadanic fast, women tend to find someone who also intends to fast, in order that the two may fast 'together' and thus support each other.

Whereas 'repaying' last year's Ramadanic debts is obligatory, many Javanese also perform additional fasting (J. *pasa sunat*) during the month of *Ruwah*, and this fasting is not restricted to the women. (It seems, however, that women are more likely to be regular fasters than are men.)[83] Voluntary fasting in *Ruwah* or *Syaban* has support in the *hadits* literature, where one of the wives of the prophet is quoted as saying:

> I never saw Allah's Apostle fasting for a whole month except for the month of Ramaḍān, and did not see him fasting in any month more than in the month of Shaᶜbān.[84]

Some people thus fast during a couple of days in this month just to get warmed up for the 'real' fast that is just around the corner. Since we are only

[80] Buitelaar 1993: 33.
[81] Cf. ḤB 3,31,171.
[82] Menstruation is not, of course, the only reason one may need to *mbayar utang*; travels and sickness during last year's Ramadan may also call for additional fasting in *Ruwah*. Note thus that men too make up for missed days during this month in Java.
[83] Similar conditions have been observed in Morocco (Buitellaar 1993: 36) and Jordan (Antoun 1968b: 100, cited in Buitelaar 1993: 36).
[84] ḤB 3,31,190. Cf. ḤB 3,31,191.

dealing with supererogatory fasting here, most Javanese argue, it renders no sin to break it prior to sunset, should there be need to do so. As a friend of mine had it, one can thus 'experiment' (I. *coba-coba*) with one's fasting abilities during this month: if one day one does not last longer than to lunch, no harm is done. And it is definitely better to engage in such (broken) fasting during *Syaban* than during Ramadan.

Most *pasa sunat* are performed during Mondays and Thursdays (J. *pasa senen kemis*), as this was the habit of the prophet. People who are used to fast during these days just continue their habits in the month of *Ruwah*, whereas more inexperienced fasters try to hang on. In addition to the *senen-kemis* fasting, the three days in the middle of the (lunar) month are also believed to be superior when it comes to fasting. This is valid for all months, but in the month of *Syaban* there is also the additional idea of *nisfu Syaban* (I., A. *niṣf Shaᶜbān*), simply meaning 'the middle of *Syaban*,' or *lailatul bara'a* (I., A. *laylatu l-barāᵓa*, the night of innocence) which renders fasting even more promising during this specific month. The status of *nisfu Syaban* within Islamic law is disputed and some *ulama* regard it to be a non-authentic fabrication, whereas other put quite some weight on it. There is *ḥadīthic* support for the idea that God descends to the lowest heaven during this month in order to provide His servants with forgiveness:

> ᶜAli reported God's messenger as saying, "When the middle of [the eighth lunar month of] Shaᶜban comes, spend the night in prayer and fast during the day, for in it God most high comes down at sunset to the lowest heaven and says, 'Is there no one who asks forgiveness so that I may forgive him? Is there no one who asks provision so that I may provide him? Is there no one afflicted so that I may relieve him?[85]

The prophet is moreover quoted as having said the following:

> Verily Allah the Glorious and Majestic look at His servants on the night of mid-Sha`ban, and He forgives those who ask forgiveness, and He bestows mercy on those who ask mercy, and He gives a delay to the people of envy and spite in their state.[86]

Being supported by this tradition, some Javanese choose to fast during the day of *nisfu Syaban* whereas they spend the night in prayer, *zikir*, and other additional devotional exercises. It is my impression that many 'ordinary' Javanese are unaware of the importance attached to this night by some of their fellow Muslims, and it is definitely so that a *ruwahan* is far more important to them than are celebrations (including fasting and supplications) of *nisfu Syaban.* Nevertheless, some Javanese Muslims organize their *ruwahan* rituals during the *nisfu Syaban*, and others may throw a special *slametan* during this night. Sometimes the opinion is raised that God decides during

[85] Quoted by Renard 1996: 14. Cf. Wensinck 1997: 154.
[86] [http://www.sunnah.org/ibadaat/fasting/night_shaban.htm] [accessed 2003-09-24]

this night who will pass away during the coming year—and what will happen to those who do not—, but this is not a commonly held belief in Java.

THE MONTH OF PASA

Sahur! Sahur! Sahur! Sahur!

Although some Muslims already performed the *traweh* (J., I. *tarawih*, A. *tarāwīḥ*) prayers the night before, *Pasa* for most Javanese begins some time before 3 a.m. on the first of Ramadan when mosque loudspeakers present their *sahur* cries.[87] *Sahur* (A. *saḥūr*) is a term used in Indonesian and Javanese as both noun and verb, denoting thus either the nocturnal meal eaten during Ramadan, or the actual eating of this meal. In his task of waking up the still sleeping local populace, the muezzin is at times helped out by neighborhood youngsters, who just love to spend the wee hours going around their *kampung* beating home made drums, yelling *sahur, sahur*! This practice, known as *tek-tekan* (J.), beyond doubt contributes to the positive childhood memories many Javanese have of Ramadan.

This section, with its subsections, will focus on whatever the Javanese do, feel, and believe during the first through the last of Ramadan. It will thus focus on those Javanese who actually perform the fast. As Saiful Mujani recently has showed in his (award-winning) doctoral dissertation from Ohio State University, this includes most of the Javanese Muslims: no less than 94% of his (Indonesian) respondents stated that they "very or quite often" perform the Ramadanic fast.[88] Some Javanese actually only fast for a couple of days during Ramadan: the first and the last; the first, the last and the middle; the first two and the last two; or some other odd combination. *Mas* Yunus, a close friend and mosque official (I. *takmir*) in Yogyakarta, likened the act of limiting one's fast to the first and last days of Ramadan to wearing only hat and shoes: however fine those pieces may be, none will pay any attention to them. And to add one day in the middle ("a piece of cloth covering the most private") will do some but hardly much good. *Mas* Yunus, and many more with him, also questioned the inherent logic in this conduct. "If one accepts the Koran as God's words, and Muhammad as His prophet," he argued once a few days into Ramadan while we were waiting for the *traweh* prayers to commence, "one cannot logically deny the 'obligatory-ness' of Ramadan (I. *wajibnya Ramadhan*)." To clarify his standpoint further, he flipped the argument after some moments of silence: "Performing only a few days of Ramadanic fasting, one cannot claim to have accepted God's revelation (I. *wahyu Tuhan*) and the way of the prophet (I. *sunat rasul*)."

[87] For many Javanese women, to be fair, Ramadan begins some time before this as they have to cook for their families; see also below.
[88] Mujani 2003: 102.

PASA ROUTINES

There is little variation in daylight hours in Indonesia due to the country's proximity to the equator. As for Blora, this means that the time for the *subuh* dawn prayer varies between 03.50 a.m. (November) and 04.35 a.m. (July), and the *maghrib* dusk prayer between 5.25 p.m. (June) and 6.01 p.m. (January). As *imsak* (I., A. *imsāk*), the time for concluding the nocturnal meal, is scheduled some ten or fifteen minutes before *subuh*, actual fasting begins at its earliest 03.35 a.m. and at its latest 04.20 a.m. The fast thus lasts for approximately fourteen hours per day in Central Java. As the climate in Indonesia is tropical, variations in temperature are likewise small throughout the year (28-35°C) although the rainy season usually presents slightly lower temperatures than the dry season. To perform the fast during the rainy season may thus be said to be a bit more 'comfortable' than to do it in the dry season, but very few Javanese seem to care about the influence of climate on their fast. Instead, they argue that a successful fast is dependent not on slight variations in temperature but on the right intention (I. *niat*) and sincerity (I. *keikhlasan*).

When the *muazzin* exclaims the *sahur* cry some time prior to 3 a.m., many Javanese women have already been up for more than an hour, preparing the food to be consumed by her family. Cooking in Java is a time consuming activity that strictly follows a bunch of unwritten rules, and few Javanese women would be happy to use prefabricated spices, for example. I once aired my opinion to *Bu* Nuri, a middle aged woman, that it would be very practical just to buy a packet of fried rice seasoning, mix that with last night's rice and a few eggs, and serve that as *sahur*. Yes, she agreed, that would be practical, but what kind of mother or wife would serve such food to her children and husband, she rhetorically asked. "I for one," she assured me, "would not have the heart to do that (I. *tidak tega*). And all the more so in Ramadan, when people really need to eat real food," she added. Instead she, as most other Javanese women, gladly—albeit not without occasional and silent complaint—spent one or a couple of pre-dawn hours in the kitchen every morning, together with her daughters and domestic help, preparing genuine home-made Javanese food for the rest of the family throughout Ramadan. At times the domestic helps (I. *pembantu*) are totally entrusted with the task of preparing the *sahur* food in Javanese homes which have such help, but their female employers usually help them out. This intervention has two reasons: the felt need by the Javanese women to reassure themselves that the food is satisfyingly cooked, and the wish to ease the burden on the maids who, perhaps, are fasting too.[89] That the *sahur* cooking is in the hands of the women is nothing strange: in Java it is the women who cook throughout the year, including the month of fasting. (Anything else would be strange, in-

[89] It is my impression that families who are devout in their religiosity prefer that their maids are that too.

deed.) Many Javanese women take pride in preparing the meals for their families during Ramadan. One young woman commented that she was pleased to cook for her husband (their children did not yet fast), and stated that it was she, by means of the food she cooked, who assured that her husband managed to keep the fast the whole day. "And that," she said, "must render some merit (I. *pahala*)."

In line with *ḥadīth* material discussed elsewhere, most Javanese are convinced that there is *berkat* (J., blessings, A. *barakāt*, sing. *barakah*) in the *sahur* food and in the consumption of it. Accordingly, most Javanese drag themselves up at around 3 a.m. to have something to eat. Apart from the perceived blessings, there is nothing 'special' to Javanese *sahur* food, which resembles—in regard to its constituents—any ordinary breakfast in Java.[90] As such it can consist of rice, vegetables, and some additional side dish (J. *lawuh*), and is served with a cup of the inevitable sweet tea and a glass of lukewarm drinking water. Among students in Yogyakarta—living away from their parents and siblings, and yet to form their own family—the *sahur* meal is usually bought in one of the many roadside food stalls (I. *warung*) present in any Javanese town. Many of these are open from 2 a.m. (or even earlier) until *imsak* during Ramadan, and some even accept pre-placed orders which may be delivered by motorcycle some time during the pre-dawn hours.

Barely awake, fasting Muslims are not thought to be provided with a culinary experience during the *sahur* meal (in spite of the women's efforts), but rather just to endow them with enough energy to keep them going until late afternoon. This nocturnal meal is usually consumed in silence (as are other meals commonly in Java), and members of the family excuse themselves and disappear as they have finished. Some return straight to bed and are sound asleep before the *imsak* cries from the mosques; others use this pre-dawn time to enjoy their last cigarette for fourteen hours (the high nicotine consumption in Java causes some distress among Javanese men during Ramadan). Others yet pick up their copy of the Koran and recite it loudly for a while; whereas others watch some special *sahur* show, or perhaps a game of soccer from some European league, on TV. Some, of course, make their ways to the closest mosque in order to join the congregational *subuh* prayers, and possibly follow a special Ramadan lecture given by the mosque official. Such Ramadan lectures are referred to by the abbreviation *kultum* (I. *kuliah tujuh menit*, seven minutes lecture), and constitute short sermons delivered just after the dawn prayers.[91] Usually, these highlight a special Ramadanic topic each day, but more general (Islamic) questions may be discussed too during these informal get-togethers. In some mosques, the *kultum* is then followed by well-attended Koran recitation classes for children. However that

[90] Note that 'breakfast' here is used in the sense of 'morning food' and hence not in the sense of 'food with which to break the fast' (which 'breakfast' signifies).

[91] Ward Keeler has devoted an article to the issue of such Ramadan sermons (1998). Note that *kultum* also are presented in connection with the *tarawih* prayers; see below.

may be, ten or fifteen minutes before the scheduled time of the *subuh* prayer, the *muazzin* loudly declares that the time for the nocturnal meal is over: *Imsak! Imsak!* Accordingly, all eating, drinking, and smoking come to an abrupt end, and the fast begins.

Some companies and parts of the state bureaucracy shorten their employees' working hours during (parts of) Ramadan, but commercial life pretty much goes on just like during any other non-Ramadanic month in Java, though with a slightly more laidback tempo and rhythm. Those who decided to return to bed immediately after the *sahur* meal are usually up at 5.30 at the latest to perform the *subuh* prayer (before it is too late), and then go to work or take care of whatever has to be taken care of. Those who by that time have recited the Koran for a couple of hours are probably quite worn out already—at least hosting dry throats due to the loud recitation—and may decide to return to bed for a couple of hours. Not all, however, have the possibility to do that and instead head directly to work. Lost sleep will be regained in the afternoon, hopefully.

The characteristic architecture of Javanese mosques captured just outside Blora.

Some elementary schools are closed throughout Ramadan (due to an initiative taken by Abdurrahman Wahid during his time as president), but higher education goes on as usual right up to the last week of the month. I never heard anybody complain about this at my campus; in fact, most students were determined that they would not let their studies disrupt their fasting, nor let their fasting disrupt their studies. It seemed to me that most students managed to keep this balance quite well, although some choose to prioritize Ramadanic activities (and thus fell asleep in class). One friend among this latter group once told me that it is better to spend the entire Ramadan on

devotional activities and pray that the coming eleven academic months will float by satisfyingly. "After all," he said, "I put more trust in God than I do in the possibility of me opening the books." Another friend was determined to make use of the ubiquitous late-comings of the lecturers, and spent the time between scheduled and actual beginning of class by silently reciting a pocket size Koran. She believed this would render her able to *khatam* (I., recite the entire Koran) during that year's Ramadan.

Markets, stores, banks, governmental offices, shopping malls, and post offices also stick to their regular opening hours during Ramadan. Consequently, regular and commercial life continues relatively undisturbed during the month of fasting, although many public spaces are less frequently visited during the first week of the month. This is due to a felt need to acclimatize one's body and mind to the new pace of daily routines, and a (sound) conviction that it is better to stay close to home during the first few days of Ramadan in order to observe the reactions of one's own body. Entering the second week of *Pasa* this time of observations is over, and life returns even more to the usual daily routines, just to further escalate and later culminate during the last few days of the month when the preparations for the *Lebaran* feast demand large amounts of activity. Ramadan is thus not associated with laziness in Java; in fact, a substantial number of Javanese have told me that they are engaging themselves in more activities than usual during the month of fasting. People thus tend to socialize more, and many also follow some afternoon course in Arabic, *fikih* (I., Islamic jurisprudence), business Chinese, or computer programming. Indeed, educational institutes often offer special, and well-attended, Ramadan courses. In one respect, this is a way of deceiving time, of course: tropical afternoons in the midst of a busy city as Yogyakarta are demanding—even if one is not fasting. On the other hand, most Javanese are in full agreement that pursuing knowledge is an obligatory (I. *wajib*) activity within the Islamic tradition ("even if you have to go as far as China"). Ramadanic afternoon courses do thus not pose any moral problems for Javanese Muslims; on the contrary, in attending these courses they generally regard themselves as fulfilling their religion.[92]

Those spending their afternoons at home may do so in front of the TV, behind the Koran, absorbed in a novel, in bed, or—if they happen to be women—in the kitchen. An Indian musical drama may seem at least as attractive as the Holy Book, as may a couple of hours in bed in order to accumulate the needed energy for the later *traweh* prayers. Accommodating to the interests of the women are cycling peddlers offering fresh vegetables, dried and salted fish, and the omnipresent soybean products, *tahu* and *tempe*. As

[92] This widespread idea of the obligatory-ness of pursuing knowledge (I. *menuntut ilmu*) has made my position as a foreign student in Java rather uncomplicated. When people understood that I had not been ordered (by some weird professor) to Java against my will, but rather made my own way there voluntarily, I was soon placed in the honorable group of people going out of their way in search of knowledge. Not as far as China, some commented, but still.

many women do not feel attracted to the idea of making their way to the market everyday during Ramadan, these circling hawkers sell quite well during the month of fasting. As they come along and announce their presence with their special sound (ringing a bell, beating a piece of wood, or simply yelling), fasting women may easily come out and pick up whatever they need for the later *buka* meal (I., meal for breaking the fast). Compared to the market, prices are slightly higher, quality somewhat lower, and the assortment relatively meager, however. As the fast prolongs, we should not be surprised then that many women return to their habit of going to the local market.

The last half hour before the breaking of the fast is often slightly chaotic in Java: traffic rules virtually loose their last supporter as everybody has to get home before the sound of the *maghrib* call to prayer. Homes are also often characterized by fervent action as all food has to be ready and everybody ideally should have taken their afternoon bath by that same time. Along the roads, seasonal vendors set up their tables offering the special Javanese drink *kolak* packed in small plastic bags, various sorts of fried foodstuffs (I. *gorengan*), and ice cubes for those mixing their own syrup. The *kolak* is a very sweet drink coocked with coconut milk as its base, and bananas, sweet potatoes, and palm sugar (I. *gula Jawa*, lit. 'Javanese sugar') as its main additional ingredients. It may be served lukewarm or with ice, and serves as a tremendously fine drink to break the fast with, as it is sweet, filling, and delicious at the same time. Notably, the *kolak* is served almost exclusively during Ramadan, and can thus be said to be a ritual drink; however, there are no specific religious conceptions associated with it. Many Javanese women take pride in their *kolak* (using semi-secret recipes) and spend substantial amounts of time in preparing it. The ones sold along the roads, they say, are just cheap copies. During this half hour preceding the breaking of the fast, food stalls and restaurants are also crowded with people who have not been able or willing to cook for themselves.

Ideally, the whole family should be gathered at home some time prior to sunset. A few minutes before the time for breaking the fast, glasses of *kolak*, sweet tea, and sweet coffee stand ready, and the aroma from the *gorengan*—in the form of fried bananas, perhaps—, and the food to be consumed later whet the appetite. The TV is often on during this time, broadcasting some Ramadanic soap opera (discussed shortly elsewhere) and also announcing the time for breaking the fast in various towns in Indonesia.

Suddenly, the mosque speaker system begins to crackle and the long awaited siren announces that the sun finally has set, and that fasting is over. The call to prayer immediately follows. In Javanese homes, people often utter *alhamdulillah* (I., A. *al-ḥamdu lillāh*, praise be to God) as they siren goes off, before they quickly reach out for a glass of *kolak* or tea. Pure water is also thought to be a superior drink to have at this moment, and it is generally believed that cold drinks should only be consumed after one have had at least one hot (that is, lukewarm). In line with the tradition of the prophet, dates—which do not grow in Indonesia—are further thought to be the most superior

fast breaking food. Consequently, dates are imported from the Middle East in immense quantities preceding and during Ramadan. Iraqi dates are generally in great demand as they are cheaper than others, but Egyptian, Tunisian, Afghani, Iranian, and Saudi Arabian dates are sold in Indonesia during Ramadan as well.

In Java, this breaking of the fast has no given pattern that is ubiquitously followed everywhere. Some families choose to break the fast together sitting on a carpet in front of the TV, whereas others break it individually, and others yet go to the mosque. The common denominator is that the initial *buka* meal only is made up of a glass of tea, *kolak*, coffee, or water, and some small snacks and/or fruits (including dates). After that, Javanese Muslims make the ritual ablution and perform the *maghrib* prayer and only some time after that—but still before *isya* and *traweh* prayers—have their dinner. Notwithstanding the quite widespread conviction in Java that there are blessings in sharing a meal together (and especially so after a day of fasting), Javanese prefer to eat alone or with close relatives only, so as to avoid potential conflicts concerning social status, prestige, and the like—questions that are touched upon by way of Javanese eating etiquette. As a consequence, Javanese only rarely break the fast together with friends and colleagues—a habit which stands in stark contrast to reports from elsewhere in the Muslim world.[93] Invitations to break the fast are, however, quite often offered, but these are generally mere *basa-basi* (J., conventionalities) that should not be taken at face value. Receiving such an offer one should just politely reply, "O, yes," and then forget about it. Should the offer after that get more detailed and include place and time for the proposed event, however, attendance is expected.

Although Javanese generally feel more or less awkward eating in the presence of other than very close relatives, there is one event that eliminates this discomfort: the collective breaking of the fast (J. *mbuka bareng*, I. *buka bersama*) in the mosque. A few days before the commencement of Ramadan in Yogyakarta one year, the local mosque official (I. *takmir*), *Mas* Yunus, arrived at my house and handed me a list of dates and names that the Ramadan committee (I. *panitia Ramadhan*) in our neighborhood had agreed upon for the organization of this collective breaking of the fast. As I found my own name in the line corresponding to the 19th of Ramadan, I was further instructed that I was supposed to bring twenty five boxes of food and as many with snacks to the mosque approximately half an hour prior to sunset on the correct date. This tradition of *buka bersama* is shared by both modernists and traditionalists and is, as far as I know, spread throughout Java. The underlying principle behind this custom is that more unfortunate Muslims must be

[93] Buitelaar (1993: 59), speaking of the Moroccan way of fasting, says that "[i]deally, close relatives share breakfast at least twice a week [during the month of fasting]. [...] Ramadan is also the time to invite friends over for breakfast [i.e., to break the fast]. Such invitations render the host *ajr* [religious merit]."

provided for with food and drink—the Ramadan committee ensures that there is sweet tea and drinking water each night—for breaking the fast in mosques. An additional gain of the practice is that the local residents get to know each other better, and thus develop a sense of togetherness. The cookies, moreover, are often left to the Koran reciters that spend a substantial part of the night in the mosque. As the 19th of Ramadan turned up, my wife and I spent the better part of the day frying *lele* (I., a kind of freshwater catfish), cooking rice, folding paper boxes, and making cookies.

It is noteworthy that the word used in Java and elsewhere in Indonesia for breaking the fast is *buka*. This word literally means 'to open' and is generally used in profane contexts (open the door, open the window, etc) only, and has no connection to Arabic (where the breaking of the fast is know as *fuṭūr* and the breakfast itself as *faṭūr* or *iftār*).[94] This contrasts starkly with other words used in connection to the month long fast: *sahur*, *imsak*, *tarawih*, *idul fitri*, and *fidyah* for example, which all show a direct 'Indonesianization' of the Arabic. Admittedly, the very terms for fasting in Javanese and Indonesian (J. *pasa*, I. *puasa*) are of Sanskrit origin, although the Arabic derived *shaum* and *siyam* occasionally are used too.

Let us return to the fast. After the *maghrib* prayer and the subsequent dinner, it is not uncommon for Javanese Muslims to feel bloated. In fact, many fasting Muslims have informed me that their hunger and thirst, which have haunted them for the last hours before sunset, immediately disappears after a glass of *kolak* and a piece of *gorengan* or a couple of dates,[95] but that they cannot reject a substantial dinner after that. My own experience is quick to support such statements. Once the *maghrib* prayers have been performed, a plate of steaming rice, freshly cooked vegetables, and some side dish naturally seems attractive. However, Javanese Ramadan *buka* meals are not as "lavish" as those described by Buitelaar in Morocco, and neither do the Javanese "indulge in excessive consumption" after sunset during the month of fasting.[96] Instead, the *buka* meal in Java is just like any other regular dinner during a non-Ramadanic month; it is just that bodies which have been denied any food or drink for over fourteen hours react slightly different from bodies which have not experienced this. The bloated feeling thus has a medical explanation, and is not to be referred to unreasonable ingestion. The commonly held idea that Muslims indulge in extreme feasts and spend the entire night by eating and drinking during Ramadan is not supported by the Javanese case.

As that bloated feeling is about to evaporate, the mosque speaker system starts to crackle again and the muezzin announces by way of the *adzan* that it is time to perform the *isya* and the subsequent special Ramadanic

[94] Occasional usage is also made in Arabic of the term *taʿjīl* (I. *takjil*).
[95] Or, rather, after one, three, or five dates, since odd numbers are preferred. (God is odd in the sense He is One.)
[96] Buitelaar 1993: 58.

traweh prayers. By that time, the clock indicates somewhere between 6.35 p.m. (May) and 7.10 p.m. (January) in Blora, and people have a few minutes to make up their mind as to whether they are going to join the congregational prayer in the neighborhood mosque or not. Given that the *traweh* prayers are of such immense importance to Javanese Muslims, a special section will be devoted to them below.

SHOLAT TRAWEH [97]

If Ramadan is the most important ritual to Javanese Muslims, then the *traweh* prayers are definitely that ritual's most crucial 'sub-ritual.' Indeed, to some Javanese, Ramadan is identical with these supererogatory nightly prayers: "Ramadan without *sholat traweh*," I was repeatedly told, "is just not Ramadan." The other way around is also true, for there exists no *traweh* prayers outside the month of fasting. During *Syaban* in 1999—when my first Ramadan in Java drew close—friends time after time reminded me on the magnitude of the impending *traweh* prayers, and how they looked forward to perform these prayers again. Newly convinced then that this nightly Ramadanic ritual was of great significance to (Javanese) Muslims,[98] I decided to visit different mosques each night during Ramadan that year in order to follow the *traweh* prayers, which I also did with the exception of a few nights when I had other engagements. It was then I realized that people who never visit their local mosque during the rest of the year show up in great numbers for the *traweh* prayers, and that people who usually are lax in their performance of the five obligatory daily *sholat* come along in order to perform these non-obligatory prayers. Mosques are consequently often crowded during the nights of Ramadan, and additional straw mats outside the actual mosques are frequently required in order to meet the sudden increase in demand of mosque space. It is not only men who show up for these prayers; women and children at times make up for half of the congregation during these nightly sessions. I thus initially appreciated the supererogatory prayers as expressing a strong Muslim unity, in that they gathered together large portions of the Muslim community. When I scratched on the surface of this manifestation, however, I found differences in ritual detail among certain groups of Muslims. The main issue between them was the number of *raka'at* (I., A. *rakᶜah*, pl. *rakaᶜāt*, units) to be performed in the *traweh* prayers.[99] I thus find it legitimate to dwell on these prayers at some length here.[100]

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[97] Parts of this section have been published earlier in the journal *Indonesia and the Malay World* (Möller 2005), and are included here with the permission of the editors of that journal.

[98] "Newly" because knowledge and appreciation of Islamic rituals are hardly gained through following classes in Islamic- or religious studies in the West.

[99] For another discussion on different opinions regarding the 'correct' number of *rakaᶜāt* to be performed in a different context, see Lambeck 1990: 30ff. Lambeck discusses the Friday prayer in Mayotte (Comoro Islands), and shows that Muslims there by tradition have performed six

The *tarāwīḥ* (A., I. *tarawih*, J. *traweh*) prayers are performed only during Ramadan: sometime after the obligatory night prayer (A. *ᶜishāʾ*, I. *isya*) but before the time of the nocturnal meal (A. *imsāk*, I. *imsak*). In Java, they are performed congregationally in the mosque immediately after the *isya* prayers, whereas those preferring to perform them in solitude may do that later. As we have seen previously in this work, the practice of *sholat traweh* is not mentioned in the Koran. It was, however, the practice of the prophet to perform such prayers, and various traditions seem to indicate that he performed no more than eight *raka'at* of them, and that he did so initially in the mosque and later in his house. The reason for this latter state of affairs is said to be that he was worried that the young Islamic community would come to regard the *traweh* prayers as obligatory—something that would substantially burden the *umat.* Muhammad thus decided to carry out his *tarāwīḥ* prayers in solitude at home, and the practice has come to be regarded by *ulama* as *sunat muakkad* (I., confirmed non-obligatory act). When the prophet had deceased and ᶜUmar bin al-Khaṭṭāb had become Islam's second caliph (A. *khalīfah*) and commander of the faithful (A. *amīru l-muʾminīn*), things changed in relation to the *tarāwīḥ* prayers. Instead of letting the Muslim community perform these supererogatory prayers individually, he arranged congregational performances of them in the mosques, and proposed that the number of units be increased to twenty three. There are no reports of contemporaneous protests to this decision.

As stated above, Javanese Muslims regard the *traweh* prayers to be of immense importance, and these prayers constitute perhaps the most important Ramadanic ritual as far as they are concerned. As such, many Javanese tend to regard the performance of these prayers as *wajib* (I., obligatory, A. *wājib*), even if they on some level are aware that such is not the case. The paradoxical result of this is that Javanese mosques are at their fullest when a non-obligatory ritual is to be performed. I recall one night in a relatively small and extremely crowded mosque in Yogyakarta when the *imam* had to stand up after the *isya* prayers (but before the actual *traweh*) to address the congregation. "Honored ladies and gentlemen," he said in the characteristic overly polite Indonesian way, "let us remember that the performance of the *tarawih* prayers is defined as *sunnah* according to Islamic law (I. *syariat Islam*). We are thus not compelled (I. *diwajibkan*) to perform these prayers," he continued, "and if we decide to do it anyway, we do not need to attend the congregational prayer in the mosque, but may perform them at home." During this short address he also drew attention to the idea that parents are obliged (I. *diwajibkan*) to care for their children, and that obligations need to be taken

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prayer cycles at this occasion (that is, the regular noon prayer plus two extra *rakaᶜāt*) whereas modernist influenced Muslims argue that the correct number should be only two (i.e., that the Friday prayer substitutes—not supplements—the noon prayer).

[100] Notably, Buitelaar has very little to say about the *tarāwīḥ* prayers in Morocco (e.g. 1993: 60, 61, 93), probably due to the unfortunate combination of the facts that she, as a woman, had limited access to the religious lives of the men, and that women rarely visit mosques in Morocco.

care of satisfyingly before any journey of additional and devotional acts can be embarked upon. Consequently, it is perhaps better, the *imam* proposed in his refined criticism, for mothers of infants to stay at home with their babies than to bring them to the mosque where they necessarily either will be breast-fed or left screaming—something that in turn will disturb the rest of the congregation. As far as I could observe from my position in the mosque, no one deviated from the *traweh* session that night, but that the message had got through was shown the following night when the congregation (especially the female part of it) was perceptibly smaller. Some people I spoke to also acknowledged the wisdom of the *imam* in this respect.

The main street of Blora with the minaret of the town mosque at the back. Compare with the picture on page 330.

A majority of the mosques and inhabitants of Yogyakarta are modernist in their religious orientation, and I was thus for quite some time unaware of the tensions that can arise between modernists and traditionalists in respect to the number of *raka'at* to be performed. It was only as I (during my *tarawih* tour in 1999) found myself in a traditionalist Nahdlatul Ulama mosque in the outskirts of Yogyakarta that I realized that differences in ritual practice play a visible and important role in the performance of these prayers. As it happened, after eight *raka'at* the man right in front of me discreetly left the mosque, as did a few others further back. At that moment I was perplexed and wondered why they had no intention of following the additional three *raka'at* of *witir* prayers (to be discussed below). More surprises were to come shortly: instead of the concluding *witir* prayers I was prepared of, the *imam* continued with yet another twelve *raka'at* of *tarawih*, and only after that

announced that three *raka'at* of *witir* were to be carried out. As during any other Ramadanic night in the mosque, I attracted some post-*traweh* attention that night, and some of those courageous enough to talk for a while explained that 'Muhammadiyah people' (that is, modernists) only perform eleven *raka'at* (eight *tarawih* plus three *witir*) during Ramadan, whereas 'NU people' (traditionalists) like themselves perform twenty three (twenty *tarawih* plus three *witir*). Later I also noticed that some Muslims left modernist mosques after eight *raka'at* too, thus ensuring themselves the opportunity of performing twelve additional *raka'at* at home before concluding with the three units of *witir.* The modernist conviction is backed up by the practice of the prophet himself, whereas the traditionalists rely on the consensus and collective wisdom of previous *ulama*.

This difference of opinion between modernists and traditionalists naturally disturbs the Muslim community and the social and inner solemnity many Javanese search for during Ramadan, just as we saw the *rukyat-hilal* debate did above. Not few Javanese Muslims with insufficient knowledge of the causes to the problem tend to uncritically stick to 'their'—or rather, their surrounding's—habits and ritual practices, with verbal slandering and defamation as results, so as to assure that little or no progress in the matter is made. Such slandering and defamation is often, however, restricted to closed parties and only rarely turn into ugly public disputes. Many mosque officials and prayer leaders in Java tend to have a wider intellectual horizon in this respect, which my first Ramadanic visit to the town mosque in Blora is witness of. As I entered the mosque—some time prior to the *isya* prayers in order to get a place in one of the front rows—the *takmir* (I., mosque official) immediately greeted me, and made inquires about my presence there. When I told him I was there for the *tarawih* prayers, he invited me to take a seat on the floor. "The *imam* here performs twenty three *raka'at*," he immediately told me as if he knew of my interest, "but you, and everyone else, are of course free to go whenever you want to." He further explained that most visitors to the town mosque in Blora are traditionalists, although a substantial number of modernists leave after eight units.

A traweh *dispute in Blora*

In my *kampung* in Blora, I found out, by talking to *Pak* Hasan, that there had been serious polemics and antagonism between defenders of the two standpoints in the *raka'at* debate a couple of years prior to my arrival there. Key figures in this polemic were *Pak* Hasan himself, a traditionalist *kyai* and the *imam* of a newly established *musholla* in the neighborhood, and *Mas* Surya, a student at the National Institute of Islamic Studies (IAIN) in Yogyakarta. I never had the opportunity to meet *Mas* Surya in person due to the fact that he no longer lived in the *kampung* when I first heard about the polemic. I came to understand, however, that he had come under modernist influence during his studies in Yogyakarta, and that he had tried to transfer those newly ac-

quired influences to his native and traditionalist area. His main object of criticism in this regard became *Kyai* Hasan, who recently had established his own small traditionalist *musholla* in the neighborhood. People were aware that a traditionalist interpretation of Islam was delivered in this prayer house, and no one had any problems with that since most of the residents indeed were either traditionalists themselves, or indifferent to the modernist-traditionalist polemic. This meant that twenty three *raka'at* were performed during the *traweh* prayers; that lengthy *zikir* sessions on occasion followed the regular *sholat*; and that additional traditionalist rituals could be expected. Living only a few houses away, *Mas* Surya could not accept this, and he probably felt that the local residents were deceived by the traditionalism of *Pak* Hasan. Consequently, he made contacts with *Kyai* Hasan and presented his modernist visions and criticized the backwardness of the Javanese traditionalist Islam. According to *Pak* Hasan, the student had told him that performing twenty three *raka'at* during the *traweh* prayers was nothing but *syirk* (I., grave sin), and that he'd better perform eleven *raka'at* only. The modernist argument was not new to *Pak* Hasan, and he could thus present his critic with the standard traditionalist rationales without much hesitation. With no more to add to the discussion at that moment, *Mas* Surya left the small prayer house—and with that also the polemic. Next time he came back to Blora from Yogyakarta, however, he brought with him a book on *traweh* prayers—advocating the performance of eight *raka'at*, of course—to *Kyai* Hasan. According to the latter, the young student also began to spread bad words about the *Kyai* in the neighborhood. Being a man of letters, *Pak* Hasan read the *traweh* book, but found it to be of little or no use, and full of what he conceived of as straightforward errors. This book was quickly shown to me by *Pak* Hasan (as he still had it) and I noted that it was a translation of an Arabic text that I had never seen before in bookstores in Java. The *kyai* did not let me look in it—let alone photocopy it—, however, as he did not want to "lead me astray too" and I can consequently not give an account of its contents here.[101] *Pak* Hasan was very displeased by the fact that he still had the book in his house, as he was afraid one of his children some day would pick it up. Consequently, he had asked his critic to recollect it, but this had never happened. (*Pak* Hasan refused to throw it away as it still was a piece of religious scholarship (albeit astray) in his eyes.)

Some time passed by, and *Mas* Surya did not change his opinion, and *Pak* Hasan too stuck to his traditionalist view. An already tense relationship thus grew even tenser. As *Pak* Hasan and I tried to reconstruct the event—shortly after the Bali bombings in 2002—the *kyai* pictured it as if he was 'terrorized' (I. *diteror*) by this young man, and the whole uneven situation he had created. As Surya refused to listen to *Pak* Hasan's arguments and discreet slandering went on, the *kyai* finally decided to publicly denounce his

[101] I tried, of course, to find this book elsewhere, but without success.

critic and elaborate on his own view in a Friday sermon. Lucky enough, *Pak* Hasan had kept this handwritten sermon, and I was able to photocopy it.[102]

In this sermon, *Kyai* Hasan presents *sholat traweh* as it was performed during the time of the prophet, during the reign of Abū Bakr, and during the reign of his successor, ᶜUmar. He also discusses the opinions of subsequent *ulama* (especially Shāfiᶜī scholars), and presents the arguments and argumentations of those advocating the performance of eight *raka'at*. The initial part of this text is in line with standard ideas about the evolution of the *tarawih* prayers, and we are told about how Muhammad initially used to perform his *tarawih* in the mosque but how he later secluded himself at home in order not to let the *tarawih* prayers become obligatory for the Islamic community. We are also told in this section that the *tarawih* prayers pretty much remained like this during the reign of Abū Bakr. ᶜUmar, however, did not like to see how Muslims performed these prayers for themselves or in small groups in the mosques, and suggested that they be performed together in the mosque under the leadership of one *imam*. He further stated that they should consist of twenty three *raka'at.* Here the view of *Pak* Hasan begins to diverge from standard traditionalist scholarship, because he states that ᶜUmar must have known how many *tarawih* units the prophet used to perform, and that he would not order his community to perform twenty three *raka'at* unless he was sure it was the custom of Muhammad to perform them in that number. *Kyai* Hasan also states that the companions of the prophet (A. *aṣ-ṣaḥābah*, I. *sahabat*) had reached a consensus (A. *ijmāʾ*, I. *ijmak*) in regard to this number, and that it thus is a part of the Islamic law (A. *sharīᶜah*, I. *syariat*) and obligatory to follow. In other words, if nightly prayers do not consist of twenty (plus three) units, then we are not talking about *traweh* prayers, but about something else. Concerning the *hadits* related by 'Aisyah in which it is reported that the prophet never performed more than eight nightly *raka'at* during Ramadan or any other month, *Kyai* Hasan agrees that this *hadits* is sound (I. *sahih*, A. *ṣaḥīḥ*) and that the statements of 'Aisyah cannot be denied. However, he ponders upon the type of *sholat* this *hadits* has in mind. Is it really *sholat tarawih*? Or is it *sholat witir*? Or *sholat tahajud* (another supererogatory nightly prayer), perhaps? Or yet some other *sholat sunnah*? That the prophet only performed eight nightly *raka'at* seems unfeasible to *Pak* Hasan who argues that the obligatory nightly prayers (*maghrib* and *isya*) together with the additional non-obligatory *sholat* associated with these, consist of no less than thirteen *raka'at*.[103] Moreover, it is repeatedly reported in the *hadits* literature that Muhammad also performed other supererogatory prayers, such as *sholat witir* and *sholat tahajud*. The eight units 'Aisyah

[102] *Pak* Hasan always delivers his sermons in Javanese, but this particular *traweh* sermon was written and read in Indonesian.

[103] I.e., three obligatory *raka'at* for the *maghrib* prayers, two supererogatory *raka'at* after them, two supererogatory *raka'at* before *isya*, four *raka'at* for the obligatory *isya* prayers themselves, and two additional *raka'at* after them.

talked about then probably refer to *sholat tahajud*, *Pak* Hasan argues, which indeed may not exceed eight units.

As *Pak* Hasan generally is a very moderate and tolerant man, I was quite surprised when I read his sermon: it would be more in line with his general attitude to allow for multiple interpretations and practices in regard to the *raka'at* debate. I was also surprised that he questioned the commonplace interpretation of the tradition in which the prophet's wife relates that her husband never performed more than eight nightly units in his prayers. And, finally, it took me by some surprise too that he suggested in this sermon that ᶜUmar ordered twenty three units to be performed based on his personal observation of the custom of the prophet. These are rather controversial conclusions.[104]

Traweh *in the* An-Nur *modernist mosque*

Let us now turn to the actual *traweh* prayers as they are performed in contemporary central Java. As should be clear by now, the execution of these supererogatory nightly Ramadan prayers cannot be described as a uniform phenomenon, and this is of course related to the *raka'at* debate. But this is not the only reason, for there exists in Java a wide flora of minor differences in regard to the *traweh* prayers, and many of these differences are peculiar to specific mosques, and at times even to specific *imam*. In describing the *sholat tarawih* as they are performed in central Java, I will thus describe the practices of one modernist and one traditionalist mosque, and add to that discussion a few peculiarities of other mosques too.

Modernist attitudes and practices in relation to *sholat tarawih* are generally quite homogenous. The description below of the *tarawih* prayers in my neighborhood mosque in Yogyakarta, *Masjid An-Nur*, is thus valid for many modernist mosques in Java.

As the muezzin announces (by way of the call to prayer) that the time for the obligatory *isya* prayers is in, people in the neighborhood start to get ready. They do not hurry, however, as they know the *imam* and the muezzin will let some time—longer than usual—elapse between the *adzan* and the actual performance of the prayer. At times the muezzin or some other mosque official will recite—or rather, sing—some *salawat* (I., praise of Muhammad, A. *ṣalawāt*) to fill these elapsing moments.[105] In the beginning of Ramadan the mosque will be crowded and additional straw mats in the parking lot will be needed to provide space for all worshippers, whereas it will be

[104] When I asked him about this a few days into Ramadan (after the *traweh* prayers) he showed a surprisingly softer attitude to the problem and simply said that any performance of *sholat tarawih* is good, regardless of the number of *raka'at*, although the performance of twenty *raka'at* is "more perfect" (I. *lebih sempurna*). He would not, however, elaborate on this further as he regarded it to be a closed topic.

[105] In many other modernist mosques, including the large *Masjid Al-Fath* in Blora, there is no *salawat* at all, and many Javanese Muslims feel that the practice is part of traditionalist Islam.

only half full (at best) during the middle and last parts of the month. A one meter wide green textile separates the mosque into two almost equally large parts: one front part, and one back part. The front part is generally slightly larger than its back equivalent, but these measures may be adjusted should circumstances require so. The front part is the male domain, whereas the women gather at the back; the green textile is mostly a symbol as people easily can (and do) see over it into the other realm. Nevertheless, this piece of cloth is regarded as necessary (by both men and women) in order to keep the two spheres separated during the *traweh* prayers. It is noteworthy that during the eleven non-Ramadanic months, no separation fabric is set up in this mosque; those (few) women joining congregational prayers do so at the back of the mosque with full visual freedom. As the neighborhood Muslims drop in, they generally perform two *raka'at* of *sholat tahiyatul masjid* (I., A. *aṣ-ṣalātu taḥīyātu l-masjid*), the non-obligatory but highly recommended prayers to be performed as one enters a mosque. This done, everybody sits down and either engage in some small talk with the one sitting next by or perhaps recite quietly some *zikir* or parts of the Koran. This is also a time that may be used for private supplications, or the uttering of statements of thanksgiving (I. *syukur*) for being able to fast for the entire day. When the *muazzin* feels that he has waited long enough, he again grabs the microphone and announces by way of a sort of condensed *adzan*, the *iqomah* (I., A. *iqāmah*), that the *isya* prayers are to begin. There is nothing special to these *isya* prayers in Ramadan; they are performed just as during the rest of the year, i.e. consisting of four *raka'at*. Each *raka'at*, as always, consists of the recital of *Al Fatihah*, the bending of the upper part of the body (I. *ruku'*, A. *rukūᶜ*), the complete prostration (I. *sujud*, A. *sujūd*), and a variety of more subtle practices, which can be studied in any regular *sholat* manual.[106] Added to this is the *niat*, the intent, which precedes the prayer. As the *salam* concludes the *isya* prayers, members of the congregation may rest for a while, since they are about to be presented with a *kultum*, a short Islamic lecture.[107] (Some may also use this time to perform two additional and individual *raka'at*.) In *Masjid An-Nur*, the Ramadan committee makes sure that such lectures are offered by invited guests every night in connection with the *tarawih* prayers, and topics covered in these sermons are generally connected to Ramadanic fasting or some other branch of Islamic worship. Once this *kultum* was offered by a local policeman who told the congregation about the police's work to eliminate the usage of narcotics in Yogyakarta, but it is far more common that the *khatib* is a local religious authority and the topic explicitly related to Islamic ritual practices or theological basics. For those who have fasted the entire day and only recently finished a substantial meal, this *kultum* offers a

[106] See for example Rifa'i 1976 (?), Al Sawwaf 1999 and Zuhri 1956 for a discussion of the *sholat* from an Indonesian perspective.

[107] Though rare, it happens that this *kultum* is presented after eight *raka'at* of *tarawih* prayers, but before the *sholat witir* (see below).

welcome break in activities. It is a time to regain one's breath after the *isya* prayers, and to let the drops of sweat come to a temporary end.[108] For kids, this is a time for play, and Javanese children indeed usually run around both inside and outside the mosque before, during, and after the *kultum*. Many try to follow the prayers, but most run out of patience after a few *raka'at* and spend the rest of the time having fun with their friends. This is a rare opportunity for Javanese children, who generally are not allowed to play outside the house after *maghrib* prayers. During Ramadan, however, things are a bit liminal.[109]

As the *kultum* is over, the muezzin raises his voice again: *aṣ-ṣalāta sunnata t-tarāwīḥi jāmiᶜatan raḥimakumullāh* (A.), which has the approximate meaning of 'Let us perform the non-obligatory *tarawih* prayers in congregation, in hope that God will extend His Grace on you all.' Some, but not all, reply by saying *lā ilāha illā llāh muḥammadur rasūlu llāh* (A., there is no god but God, Muhammad is the prophet of God). This is the sign that the *tarawih* prayers are about to begin and the entire congregation raises and starts to mumble individually the prescribed intent for this: *uṣallī sunnata t-tarāwīhi lilāhi taᶜālā* (A.), i.e., 'I intend to perform the non-obligatory *tarawih* prayers for God, the Exalted.'[110] Most Javanese have interiorized this intent in Arabic, but some just state their personally composed intents in Javanese. This done, the *imam* raises his two hands and utters *Allāhu akbar* (A., God is greater), and commences the first *raka'at* by reading loudly *Al Fatihah* and one additional Koranic chapter. What first differs these *tarawih* prayers from their obligatory equivalents is that there is no 'sitting' between the second and the third *raka'at*; instead the *imam* and the congregation immediately go on to perform the third and the fourth prayer cycle. As the fourth *raka'at* is over and the *salam* uttered, the congregation may again rest for a short while. (It is worth mentioning that the word *tarāwīḥ* is grammatically linked to *istirāḥah*, which bears the meaning 'relaxation' or 'rest'; *istirahat* in Indonesian.) It is not a complete rest, however, since the congregation is thought to repeat after the muezzin the following (line by line):

astaghfīru llāhu l-ᶜazīm
astaghfīru llāhu l-ᶜazīm
astaghfīru llāhu l-ᶜazīm
allāhu lā ilāha illā llah huwa l-ḥayyu l-qayyūm
rabbanā fī d-dunyā ḥasanah
wa fī l-ākhirati ḥasanah

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[108] It is amazing how inadequately ventilated the majority of the Javanese mosques are. I once discussed this with a Javanese architect who acknowledged that he rarely could focus as wholeheartedly as he would like on the prayers, since his mind always was busy thinking about how one could improve the circulation of the air in the mosque. When mosques are crowded (as they are during Ramadan and in connection with the Friday prayer), the poor ventilation becomes especially demanding.

[109] See a subsequent chapter for a discussion of the liminality of Ramadan in Java.

[110] This is a condensed intention; more extensive versions—stating amongst other things the number of *raka'at* to be performed—exist as well.

wa qinā ᶜadhāba n-nār
allāhumma ṣalli ᶜalā sayyidinā muḥammad

In English this formula would read:

I ask God the Mighty for forgiveness
I ask God the Mighty for forgiveness
I ask God the Mighty for forgiveness
God – there is no deity save Him, the Ever Living, the Self-Subsistent Fount of all Being
O, our Sustainer! Grant us good in this world
and good in the life to come,
and keep us safe from suffering through the fire.
O, God, bless our leader, Muhammad

Line four and lines five through seven are Koranic injunctions.[111]

Now the break is over, which the muezzin announces by repeating the words *aṣ-ṣalāta sunnata t-tarāwīḥi jāmiᶜatan raḥimakumu llāh* (see above). The congregation then rises again and performs four more units of *tarawih* prayers, following the *imam*. The subsequent rest is again filled by the above-mentioned formula, and then the *tarawih* prayers are over. Before dispersing the congregation, however, the *imam* will also perform three additional *raka'at* of *witir* (I., A. *witr*) prayers. The performance of *sholat witir* has the status of *sunnah* within Islamic law, but many *ulama* have come to regard it almost as an obligatory ritual act.[112] Before the muezzin declares the commencement of these prayers (A. *aṣ-ṣalāta sunnata l-witri jāmiᶜatan raḥimakumu llāh*), portions of the congregation stand up and leave the mosque. There are two possible reasons that may explain this: the first is that those leaving the mosque are traditionalists who feel that the *traweh* prayers not yet are concluded. Since they believe that these nightly Ramadanic prayers should consist of twenty prayer cycles (see below), they intend to perform an additional twelve *raka'at* at home, before concluding them with the *witir*. But those leaving the mosque after eight cycles may also be modernists who agree with the *imam* that the Ramadanic prayers should only consist of eight *raka'at*. However, they intend to perform more supererogatory (but non-*tarawih*) prayers before they conclude that day's *sholat* with the *witir*. After *witir* has been performed, no other non-obligatory *sholat* are possible that day.

In *Masjid An-Nur*, the *witir* prayers consist of three *raka'at* that are carried out in one sequence—that is, without *salam* after two units. Immediately after the third *raka'at*, the *imam* or the *muazzin* declares in Indonesian that the time has come to state the intent (I. *niat*) for tomorrow's fast, and he invites the congregation to do this collectively by the latter repeating the leader's words:

[111] QS 2:255 and 2:201 respectively. Note that difference in style in this translated passage is due to the fact that the Koranic quotes are taken from Asad (1980).
[112] Al Sawwaf 1999: 199.

Nawaytu ṣawma ghadin ᶜan adāᵓi farḍi sh-shahri ramaḍāna hādhihi s-sanati farḍān lillāhi taᶜālā.
(I intend to fast tomorrow due to the religious duty of Ramadan this year, for God the Exalted.)

For children this is not only the end but also the culmination of the *traweh* prayers, and they seem to compete with each other to see who can state their intent most loudly. The *traweh* prayers are thus concluded by a bunch of kids screaming *nawaytu ṣawma*, and so on. In the *An-Nur* mosque, the intent is uttered in Arabic only, and once done, the congregation quickly splits up and people return to their respective homes. (A few Muslims stay on, however, and start to recite the Koran, but this will be dealt with under a special entry.)

Since the beginning of the *isya* prayers, an ample hour has passed by at this time.

Traweh *in the traditionalist* Al-Rahman *prayer house*

Let us now turn to the traditionalist prayer house in my neighborhood in Blora: *Musholla Al-Rahman*.[113] This is a very small *musholla* situated in a narrow lane adjacent to the house of its owner and regular *imam*. As it is not a mosque, no Friday sermons are delivered here, and the place is generally quite calm during the non-Ramadanic months. There is only room for at the most three lines of worshippers (with seven or eight persons in each row), and the women have been given an even smaller area to the left of the actual *musholla* (in a room that initially did not belong to the *musholla*, but to the home of the *imam*). The male and female sides of the *musholla* are separated by a concrete wall, in which a hole has been made for a tiny window.[114] As for the *adzan* and the *iqomah*, the practices of this hamlet show no differences from the modernist practices described above. The *salawat* filling the time between them, however, is longer and more musically adorned than the Yogyakartan *salawat*. This is due to the beautiful voice of one of the *imam*'s grownup sons. This man, *Mas* Syafi, recites-cum-sings his *salawat* with extreme emotional precision and his voice holds a seemingly never-ending capacity. This competence of *Mas* Syafi has rendered him a popular performer of *salawat* (and reciter of the Koran), and many Muslims in the neighborhood have learnt by heart long portions of Arabic *salawat* due to

[113] Again, one example suffice here, although references are also made to other traditionalist mosques when their practices differ from that of *Musholla Al-Rahman*.
[114] In the large (traditionalist) town mosque in Blora, *Masjid Baiturrahman*, the mosque is—during Ramadan—divided into a smaller left wing for the women and a larger right wing for the men. This ensures that women too may perform their prayers in the desirable first *sof* (I., line, A. *ṣaff*) in the mosque. Some argue (with *ḥadīthic* support) that the most desirable place for women in the mosque is at the very back, however, and there is thus a tendency that Muslim women intending to perform the *traweh* prayers to occupy the backer parts of their left wing first.

them often enjoying the performances of this local genius. Consequently, as *Mas* Syafi vocally beautifies the Ramadanic nights just prior to the *isya* prayers, men who have already made their way to *Musholla Al-Rahman* join in the singing.

After *Mas* Sayfi has summoned the neighborhood Muslims to the *sholat isya*, the *imam* stands up and loudly pronounces the intent for the prayers, and this constitutes the first sign that we are in a traditionalist hamlet (as modernists state the intent silently, if they state it at all). The obligatory *isya* prayers are carried out in a rush, and there is no room for any additional *sunnah* prayers after that, and neither is there any sermon in the form of a *kultum*.[115] Instead, the one having shouldered the role of Bilāl (I. Bilal, the muezzin of the prophet), in this case *Mas* Syafi, in a gentle voice recites an extended supplication in Arabic before raising his voice to a high pitch reciting the following 'lines,' which are answered by the congregation (I. *jama'ah*):

> Bilal: *allāhumma ṣalli ᶜalā sayyidinā muḥammad*
> (O God, bless our leader, Muhammad)
> Jama'ah: *allāhumma ṣalli wa sallim ᶜalayh*
> (O God, bless and grant him salvation)
> Bilal: *allāhumma ṣalli ᶜalā sayyidinā wa mawlānā muḥammad*
> (O God, bless our leader and master, Muhammad)
> Jama'ah: *allāhumma ṣalli wa sallim ᶜalayh*
> (O God, bless and grant him salvation)
> Bilal: *allāhumma ṣalli ᶜalā sayyidinā wa nabiyyinā wa ḥabībinā wa shafiᶜinā wa dhukhrinā wa mawlānā muḥammad*
> (O God, bless our leader, our prophet, our beloved, our intercessor, our saviour, and master, Muhammad)
> Jama'ah: *allāhumma ṣalli wa sallim ᶜalayh*
> (O God, bless and grant him salvation)
> Bilal: *aṣ-ṣalāta sunnata t-tarāwīḥi jāmiᶜatan raḥimakumu llāh*
> (Let us perform the non-obligatory *tarawih* prayers in congregation, in hope that God will extend His Grace on you all)
> Jama'ah: *lā ilāha illā llāh muḥammadun rasūlu llāh*
> (There is no god but God, Muhammad is the prophet of God)

While reciting this, the muezzin does not pause between his 'lines,' and this means that the *jama'ah* has to squeeze in its *allāhumma ṣalli wa sallim ᶜalayh* to the best of its ability: the result is that everybody more or less yell this formula without any pauses either. And the result of this, in turn, is that the voice of the muezzin is drowned by all the other voices, and that no one probably could tell when the session was over, had they not seen the *imam* get up from his seated position.[116]

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[115] In many other traditionalist mosques there is time for both additional *sholat sunnah* and *kultum*. These practices are thus in no way anathema to traditionalist Islam in Java.

[116] The situation is not always this chaotic in traditionalist mosques. In *Masjid Baiturrahman*, for example, the situation pretty much looks like its modernist equivalent (as described above) in this respect. It is however common that that this 'dialogue' between 'Bilal' and the *jama'ah* is present in traditionalist mosques.

As the *traweh* commences, one is immediately struck by the high tempo: the different Koranic chapters are recited at such a pace that the words seem to float into each other, and the recital itself is kept at a minimal length due to the selection of these chapters (only the shortest are recited). Moreover, the different *sholat* positions are only held for a few instances, so as to make certain that the performance of one *raka'at* is over before long. Modernist critics on occasion refer to this high-tempo *traweh* as *sholat ayam*—that is, 'chicken prayers.' To watch traditionalists perform these prayers, they say, is like watching a bunch of chicken picking after grains of rice in the soil: it is fast, it is a mere reflex, and it is seemingly uncontrolled. The tempo is high indeed, and before one knows it, two *raka'at* have already been carried out and closed by the *salam*. Whereas the modernists carry out the *tarawih* units four-by-four, the traditionalists utter the *salam* after each two *raka'at*. After the first two *raka'at* the time for relaxation is minimal, as there only is time for the muezzin to raise his voice and state: *aṣ-ṣalātu jāmiᶜah* (A., let us pray congregationally). The responses to this are multiple: some say *lā ilāha illā llāh*, some repeat the words of the muezzin, and others say nothing at all. After yet another two units, there is a slightly longer pause in which the congregation under the leadership of the *iman* recites the following (thrice):

> *subḥāna llāh, wa l-ḥamdu lillāh, wa lā ilāha illā llāh, wa llāhu akbar*.
> (Glory be to God, and All Praise is due to God, and there is no god but God, and God is greater.)[117]

Before the next two *raka'at* continues, the *imam* also recites a supplication that is punctuated by frequent and loud *amin*.

In such sequels the *traweh* prayers are then performed until twenty *raka'at* have been carried out. If one sequel consists of four *raka'at*, it would thus look like this:

1. Bilal: *aṣ-ṣalāta sunnata t-tarāwīḥi jāmiᶜatan raḥimakumu llāh* (with occasional and different answers)
2. First *raka'at*: *Al Fatihah* (QS 1) plus additional (variable) Koranic chapter
3. Second *raka'at*: *Al Fatihah* plus *sūratu l-ikhlāṣ* (QS 112)
4. Short pause. Bilal: *aṣ-ṣalātu jāmiᶜah* (with occasional answers)
5. Third *raka'at*: *Al Fatihah* plus additional (variable) Koranic chapter
6. Fourth *raka'at*: *Al Fatihah* plus *sūratu l-ikhlāṣ*
7. A little longer pause: *subḥāna llāh, wa l-ḥamdu lillāh, wa lā ilāha illā llāh, wa llāhu akbar* (thrice), plus supplication

After five such sequels (twenty *raka'at*), the muezzin announces that it is time to conclude this nightly session by way of three units of *witir*.[118]

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[117] In other traditionalist mosques or *musholla* this formula may have a different form. In *Masjid Baiturrahman*, for example, one often hears *ashhadu an lā ilāha illa llāh, astaghfiru llāh, allāhumma inni asᵓaluka l-jannah, wa aᶜūdhubika mina n-nār* (A., I bear witness that there is no god but God, I ask for forgiveness, O God, I ask for Paradise and protection from the fire).

These are not—in contrast to the practices in modernist mosques and prayer houses—performed consecutively, but divided into two parts: the first hosting two units, the second only one. During the last *raka'at* the three last chapters of the Koran are recited (QS 112, 113, and 114) in addition to *Al Fatihah*. This done, the *imam* recites yet another extended supplication in Arabic, before he invites the congregation to recite some or all of the following phrases repeated (3, 9, 20, 'infinite') times:

> *astaghfiru llāh, li l-muʾminūn wa l-muʾmināt*
> (God, forgive the believing men and the believing women)
> *subḥāna llāhu wa biḥamdih*
> (Glory be to God, and to Him praise)
> *lā ilāha illā llāh*
> (There is no god but God)
> *wa ilāhukum ilāhun wāḥidun, lā ilāha illā huwa r-raḥmānu r-raḥīm*
> (And your God is the One God, and there is no god but He, the Most Gracious, the Dispenser of Grace)
> *lā ilāha illā llāhu waḥdahu lā sharīkalah, lahu l-mulku wa lahu l-ḥamdu yuḥyī wa yumītu wa huwa ᶜalā kulli shayin qadīr*
> (There is no god but God, the One, without any partners, to Him is the kingship and to Him is all praise, He brings life and He brings death, and He has the power over everything)
> *allāhumma ṣalli ᶜalā sayyidinā muḥammadin ᶜabdika wa rasūlika n-nabiyyi l-ummiyyi wa ᶜalā ālihi wa aṣḥābihi wa sallim*
> (O God, bless our leader, Muhammad, Your servant and prophet, the illiterate apostle, and grant his family and companions peace)

This *zikir* (I., A. *dhikr*) varies in form and length from night to night, and it is up to the *imam* to recite 'whatever' he wants; the congregation listens and follows. Sometimes entire (but short) Koranic chapters are recited and at times only certain verses. (The quoted lines above are only a few selected examples.) *Zikir* sessions like these are sometimes referred to in Java by the word *wirid* (A. *wird*), and the two terms are often used interchangeably. Elsewhere *wird* are usually strongly connected to specific Sufi masters, and may not be recited without the explicit permission of the relevant *shaykh*,[119] but such usage is (among 'ordinary Muslims,' at least) unknown in Indonesia.

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[118] In some traditionalist mosques, this is the time for pronouncing the intent for tomorrow's fast, which thus is done before the *witir* prayers. Note also that some traditionalists leave the mosque before the performance of the *witir* prayers, in order to be able to perform more additional (but non-*tarawih*) *sholat* at home before concluding the day with the *witir*. Above we noticed a similar attitude among some modernists who prefer to leave the mosque after eight *raka'at*. In larger traditionalist mosques one inevitably also sees modernists who leave the congregation after eight *raka'at* have been performed. This thus gives support to Mujani's idea that mosques in Indonesia are "inclusive" and that two Muslim groups being involved in a dispute may perform their rituals together in the same mosque (2003: 134). It is my impression, however, that if the possibility is present, modernists will go to a modernist mosque and traditionalists to a traditionalist mosque.

[119] Denny 2002.

Some mosques in Java have standardized formulae to be repeated after the *traweh* prayers. In such cases the congregation is aware of this since the local Ramadan committee has let circulate a small pamphlet containing supplications, *zikir*, and intents to be interiorized in the neighborhood prior to Ramadan. One such pamphlet circulating in a neighboring area in Blora during Ramadan in 2002 suggested the following *tarawih* supplication (I. *do'a sholat tarawih*):

> *subḥāna l-māliki l-qudūs*
> (Glory be to the Sovereign, the Most Holy)
> *subḥāna l-māliki l-qudūs*
> (Glory be to the Sovereign, the Most Holy)
> *subḥāna l-māliki l-qudūs*
> (Glory be to the Sovereign, the Most Holy)
> *subbūhun qudusun rabbunā wa rabbu l-malāʾikati wa r-rūh*
> (Most Glorious and Most Holy, Lord of the angels and the Spirit)
> *allāhumma innaka ʿafuwwun karīm, tuḥibu l-ʿafwa fāʿfu ʿannī*
> (O God, truly You are the Most Forgiving and Most Noble, You love forgiveness, so forgive me)
> *allāhumma innā nasʾaluka riḍāka wa l-jannata wa naʿūdhu bika min sakhatika wa n-nār*
> (O God, we ask for Your favors and Paradise, and we seek Your protection from Your discontent and from the fire).[120]

When the *imam* feels that the *zikir*, *wirid*, or *doa* has reached its conclusion, he goes on to invite the congregation to state the intent for tomorrow's fast, first in Arabic and then in Javanese:

> *Niat ingsun puasa tutuko sedino sesuk anekani ferdhune wulan romadlon ing sak jerone tahun iki ferdhu kerono miturut dhawuhe Allah* (J.).[121]

This done, the *imam* or the *muazzin* starts to sing yet another *salawat* and all present sing along, shake each other's hands, and return home. Again, around an hour has passed by since the *isya* prayers commenced. As in the modernist mosques, some Muslims linger on in the mosque in order to get ready for the Koran reading session, and schoolchildren flock around the *imam* and the *muazzin* in order to get their signatures in small Ramadanic schoolbooks, which their teacher in religion (i.e. Islam) later will scrutinize. A large amount of signatures renders higher grades.[122]

Here we should also shortly draw attention to a phenomenon known as *tarling* in Java. *Tarling* is short for *tarawih keliling* (I.) which means 'cir-

[120] I have also heard this supplication in modernist mosques in Java.
[121] The meaning is identical to that listed above in connection to the modernist *tarawih* prayers.
[122] These small books cover a wide range of Ramadanic activities that need to be signed and accounted for: fasting, obligatory *sholat*, Friday prayers, *sholat tarawih*, *tadarus Al Qur'an* (reciting the Koran), interiorization of Koranic chapters, interiorization of supplications, dawn lectures, dusk lectures, the payment of *zakatulfitri*, *sholat id*, and *silaturrahmi*. See for example Hariyoto & Budiyono n.d. Children are thus quite busy during Ramadan.

cling *tarawih*' and denotes the practice of local politicians and *ulama* who perform their *tarawih* prayers in different locations each night. These locations are not necessarily mosques; sometimes offices of the state bureaucracy are used, sometimes luxury hotels. The idea of these *tarling* sessions is to strengthen the bonds of brotherhood (I. *tali persaudaraan*) felt between Muslims in the great *umat*. Thus, the practice is occasionally referred to by the acronym *tarhim* (I.), which is short for *tarawih dan silaturahim* (I., *tarawih* and the bonds of brotherhood).[123] These *tarling* or *tarhim* sessions are seen as vehicles for a needed rapprochement between the state bureaucracy and the local population, and various government officials use them to deliver their ideas and political goals in the *kultum*. For local *ulama* there is the possibility of spreading some perceived orthodoxy during these sessions.

(In the same spirit, some companies organize *tarawih* nights with all their employees in order to strengthen the bonds between employer and employee as well as among the employees themselves. A few mayor national companies also arrange very popular *tarling* with famous *khatib* (I., 'preacher') all over the country during Ramadan. These latter have a strong flavour of badly concealed marketing, according to the writer.)

KORANIC RECITATION DURING RAMADAN

As we know, the month of Ramadan may be referred to by the expression *shahru t-tilāwah* (A.), or 'the month of reciting [the Koran].' The reason for this is (at least) threefold: firstly, the Koran was first revealed to Muhammad during Ramadan; secondly, *Jibrīl* used to recite the Koran together with the prophet during this month; and thirdly, Muslims around the world recite the Koran to an unprecedented degree during Ramadan. We should thus not be surprised to find Koranic recitation in a variety of contexts in Java during Ramadan. In homes, in mosques, and in study classes the words of God are continuously recited during this month. Of course, many Javanese Muslims recite the Koran throughout the year, but there is a noticeable increase in recitation during Ramadan. Ramadan is also a favored occasion for a complete Koran recitation (from beginning to end). In non-Ramadanic contexts it is more common to recite certain parts of the Holy Book, without feeling any obligation to perform the entire recitation. This, again, is the result of the practice of Muhammad and the archangel *Jibrīl*.[124]

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[123] Note that *tali persaudaraan* is an Indonesian translation of the Arabic derived *silaturahmi* or *silaturahim* (as discussed elsewhere in this work).

[124] Of course, complete recitations occur in non-Ramadanic contexts too. One of my former lecturers in contemporary Indonesian literature, for example, acknowledged that he routinely recited the Koran from the first chapter to the last. Sometimes he settled for one *juz* per day, but not rarely did he recite two, three, or even more *juz* during one and the same day, and this he did throughout the year.

In Javanese and Indonesian, reciting the Koran is referred to by either *ngaji*, *tilawatul Qur'an*, or *tadarus al Qur'an*.[125] As the Koran is aptly divided into thirty parts (A. *ajzāʾ*, sing. *juzʾ*, I. *juz*)[126] many optimistic and enthusiastic Javanese Muslims have pre-Ramadanic plans to recite the entire Koran during the month of fasting by way of reciting one *juz* per day. Although a substantial number of Javanese do *khatam* (I., recite the entire Koran, A. *khatamu l-qurʾān*) during Ramadan, most of those making plans for it usually fall behind the schedule after a couple of days and realize the impossible task it would be to make up for this after a week or two. They may then continue to recite as long parts per day as they are able of, or just to recite some of their favorite Koranic passages over and over again. One friend of mine told me that he would like to recite the entire Koran during Ramadan, but that he had neither the time nor the needed patience to do so. Instead, he decided that he would recite the last thirtieth of the Koran, the popular *juz 'amma*, each day during the month, since he knew this part quite well and felt he could recite it without major linguistic obstacles. Those who manage to stick to their plans of reciting one *juz* per day will experience a successive (but slightly irregular) increase in intensity in their recitation. Their travel on the Koranic road will begin in the long, mellow, and legalistic Medinan chapter *al-baqarah*—which in itself consists of more than one *juz*—, whereas their journey will end in the short, intense, and powerful Meckan chapters consisting of only a few lines that conclude the Koran. As Ramadan approaches its end, this may have a rather suggestive effect on the reciting and fasting Muslim.

In 2000 (1421 AH) I decided for the first time that I would recite the entire Koran during that year's Ramadan. It was after much hardship and linguistic struggle I found my self in the last week of Ramadan on schedule, and I was enthusiastically convinced that I would fulfill my task. However, as three days of the fast remained, I fell seriously ill and could not complete the undertaking. The following year I was determined to succeed, and had prepared myself by short but continuous recitations throughout the year. As it turned out, I reached *sūratu n-nās* (QS 114) in the afternoon in the last day of Ramadan, and was immensely satisfied. Only after that could I understand what my friends had said earlier about *khatam Al Qur'an*, and I could understand why they strove to achieve it year after year. I share with my friends in this respect an inability to describe the feelings after completing the entire recitation of the text, and can here just draw the reader's attention to the fact that fasting for fourteen hours in a tropical country is in itself quite tiresome. To add to this—and all the other daily activities—a daily Koran recitation demanding between one and two hours per day, is rather challenging, all the

[125] Of these, only the first is an indigenous term; the second has its origin in the Arabic *tilāwatu l-qurʾān* and the third is related to the Arabic verb *darasa*, which means 'to study' or 'to teach.'
[126] Each *juzʾ* is further divided into two *aḥzāb* (sing. *ḥizb*), and these in turn are divided into four *rubʿāt* (sing. *rubʿ*). See Nelson 2001: 5.

more so since the recital is carried out aloud (which results in dry throats). When the month long exercise then comes to an end, one cannot but feel good.

The complete recitation of the Koran during Ramadan can be guaranteed in a majority of Java's mosques. There, Ramadan committees or mosque officials usually set up schedules for the Ramadanic recitation and engage local Muslims known for their recitation abilities and love of the Koran. These are the ones lingering on in the mosque after the *tarawih* prayers, and those who each night have loads of cookies and sweet tea at their disposal. In some mosques, like the modernist *Masjid An-Nur* in Yogyakarta, schedules are fixed and each night sees the recitation of two *juz*. This means that the entire Koran is recited twice during Ramadan. Other mosques, however, like the traditionalist *Masjid Al-Fath* in Blora, have open schedules. The only thing that is sure in such instances is that the entire recital of the Koran is guaranteed, and that it probably will be recited in its entirety three or four or even more times during this month. Recitation is begun after the *tarawih* prayers and lasts for a couple of hours. At the time of *sahur*, the recitation is begun again and keeps going right up to the time if *imsak*. After the *subuh* prayers have been performed, the Koranic recitation may continue for yet another hour.

Many mosques also arrange Koranic study groups during Ramadan, as do some private educational institutes. The mosque study groups are primarily thought to engage the neighborhood children, but some mosques also arrange courses for adults. Koranic courses like these, whether for children or for grownups, may be of two kinds: recitation classes and exegesis classes. In the first of these, the basics of *tajwīd* (A.), or the "system of rules regulating the correct oral rendering of the Qurʾan,"[127] is learnt out. In Java, a system called *Iqro'* (A. *iqraʾ*) is often used for this purpose, and students are taken from the presentation of the Arabic alphabet to complex Koranic structures. The emphasis is here entirely on the correct recitation of the text, and little or no attention is paid the meaning of the recited material. In the exegesis (A. *tafsīr*) classes, however, Koranic meaning stands in focus. A certain verse or cluster of verses is selected for each meeting, and the participants are encouraged to discuss—under the leadership of the *imam*—possible different interpretations and meanings. In addition, emphasis is also laid on the reasons for the revelation (I. *asbabun nuzul*, A. *asbābu n-nuzūl*), and how the Koranic injunction may be implemented in the daily life of the Muslims.

(For those not willing to join a mosque Koranic class, several TV-stations provide both *tajwid* and *tafsir* classes during Ramadan.)

On regional, national and international levels, in addition, Koran recitation competitions are frequently held in connection with Ramadan. In competitions like these, both the beauty and the *tajwīd* correctness of the reciters are

[127] Nelson 2001: 14.

judged, and Indonesia has lately achieved honorable positions in several such international *tilāwah* competitions.

How can the sudden increase in Koranic recitation during Ramadan be explained? One explanation that was frequently given to me was the idea that Ramadanic *ibadah* (I., A. *ʿibādah*, acts of devotion) are rewarded according to a special Ramadanic scale. The recital of one single Koranic verse or short chapter in Ramadan may thus equate—in relation to divine rewards—the complete recitation of the text during any non-Ramadanic month. The attraction of this is obvious, and some friends have (with this idea in mind) expressed their conviction that Koranic recitation outside of Ramadan is far more tiresome than rewarding. According to routine reciters, however, this idea is grounded in the disbelief that there is nothing more to Koranic recitation than the uttering of Arabic sounds and the turning of pages. But there is more to Koranic recitation than that, they say, since non-Ramadanic recitation ensures that a Muslim may live with and by the Koran. Koranic principles may be implemented in social life, and Koranic truisms may affect the heart and mind of the reciter. Moreover, Koranic recitation is thought to bring calmness (I. *ketenangan*) and tranquility (I. *ketenteraman*) to the reciter, and this is not limited to the month of fasting.

Another explanation that has been given to me by some Javanese Muslims is the idea that Koranic recitation may carry (I. *membawa*) private supplications (I. *doa*) right up to God. The recitation is thus seen as a vehicle that transports prayers to the divine realm. Reference is here occasionally made to QS 2:186 which has it that God listens to and answers the supplications of the believers,[128] but more scripturally inclined Muslims deny a direct relationship between recitation and the granting of supplications, even with such alleged legitimizing foundations. Koranic recitation may very well, they argue, have such positive effects, but it is not an Islamic principle that it automatically would be so.

From the *hadits* material, we know that it is said about Muhammad that he became "more generous than a fast wind" in the month of fasting. Interestingly, this statement always occurs in connection with the telling of how *Jibrīl* came down to the prophet and recited the Koran with him during each Ramadan:

> The Prophet was the most generous amongst the people, and he used to be more so in the month of Ramadan when Gabriel visited him, and Gabriel used to meet him on every night of Ramadan till the end of the month. The Prophet used to recite the Holy Qur'an to Gabriel, and when Gabriel met him, he used to be more generous than a fast wind (which causes rain and welfare).[129]

[128] Note the proximity of QS 2:186 to the Koranic verses laying the foundations for Ramadanic fasting (QS 2:183-185, 2:187).
[129] ḤB 3,31,126. Cf. ḤM 30,5718.

The (direct) relationship between generosity and Koranic recitation is rarely discussed in Java. But it is something of a truism that Koranic recitation may evoke sought-after qualities in a Muslim, and that generosity is a fundamental of Islamic life. (This latter axiom will be discussed under a special entry.) It is thus possible to argue—and not few Javanese do just this—that the act of reciting the Koran forms ideal Muslims, or at least plays a prominent role in this forming.

NUZULUL QUR'AN, *LAILATUL QADAR* AND *MALEMAN*

When it comes to *Nuzulul Qur'an* (I., A. *nuzūlu l-qurʾān*, the 'coming down' of the Koran, the revelation) and *Lailatul Qadar* (I., A. *laylatu l-qadr*, the Night of Power) in Indonesia, some confusion exists. One the one hand we have the following Koranic injunctions, which seem to imply that *Lailatul Qadar* and *Nuzulul Qur'an* are one and the same event, or that they at least 'happened' on the same occasion:

> *Ḥa. Mīm*.
> Consider this divine writ, clear in itself and clearly showing the truth
> behold, from on high have We bestowed (*anzalnāh*) it on a blessed night (*layaltin mubārakah*): for, verily, We have always been warning [man]
> On that [night] was made clear, in wisdom, the distinction between all things [good and evil].[130]

> Behold, from on high have We bestowed (*anzalnāh*) this [divine writ] on the Night of Destiny (*laylati l-qadr*)
> And what could make thee conceive what it is, that Night of Destiny?
> The Night of Destiny is better than a thousand months:
> in hosts descend in it the angels, bearing divine inspiration by their Sustainer's leave; from all [evil] that may happen
> does it make secure, until the rise of dawn.[131]

> It was the month of Ramaḍān in which the Qurʾān was [first] bestowed (*unzil*) from on high as a guidance unto man and a self-evident proof of that guidance, and as the standard by which to discern the true from the false.[132]

In other words, the Koran was revealed during Ramadan, and more precisely during the Night of Power (A. *laylatu l-qadr*): *Nuzulul Qur'an* happened on *Lailatul Qadar*, so to speak. On the other hand, we have two distinct celebrations or commemorations of *Nuzulul Qur'an* and *Lailatul Qadar* respectively in Java (and elsewhere in Indonesia). The first of these is commemorated on the 17th of Ramadan, whereas the latter generally is thought to fall on the 27th, or some of the other last odd nights of Ramadan.[133] Surprisingly, there exists

[130] QS 44:1-4.
[131] QS 97:1-5.
[132] QS 2:185.
[133] See previous chapters for discussions on the dating of *Lailatul Qadar*.

very little—almost negligible little—written material on this subject, and few Javanese seems to spend much time or energy reflecting on the relationship between these two commemorations.

One of the (very) few scholars in Indonesia who have written something on this relationship is the well-known Muslim liberal, or neo-modernist, Nurcholish Madjid. Madjid states repeatedly that the commemoration of *Nuzulul Qur'an* is a specific Indonesian ritual, that has no equivalent elsewhere in the Muslim world. This, he argues, is due to the creative *ijtihad* of H. Agus Salim, which was approved of by then-President Soekarno.[134] In this view, *Nuzulul Qur'an* and *Lailatul Qadar* do not coincide. The former is commemorated on the 17th of Ramadan, the "day when the true was distinguished from the false" (A. *yawma l-furqān*), that is, the "day when the two hosts met in battle" (A. *yawma l-taqā l-jamᶜān*), that is during the war at Badr.[135] Ultimately, it is the 'coming down' of the Koran—which *nota bene* is the literal understanding of *Nuzulul Qur'an*—that is commemorated on this day. *Lailatul Qadar*, on the other hand, is celebrated or commemorated during one of the last odd days of Ramadan, most often the 27th. What is 'left' for this occasion if the Koran was revealed during the 17th, is the idea that this night has profound influences on people's destinies for the coming year, or even longer ("a thousand months"). On this night, in line with QS 97, the "angels and the Spirit"[136] come down to earth, something which ensures its prosperousness and importance within the Islamic community.

According to Madjid, the *ijtihad* of commemorating *Nuzulul Qur'an* and *Lailatul Qadar* separately is a very good thing since it "reminds us [the Indonesian citizens] of the spiritual values it holds that God participates or intervenes (in a positive meaning) in our nation's history."[137] Now, how can this be? According to Madjid, this is caused by the fact that Indonesia's day of independence (August 17th, 1945) coincided with the 17th of Ramadan.[138] This is a partial truth: August 17th, 1945, did coincide with Ramadan 1364 AH, but it was not the seventeenth of Ramadan, but rather the eighth. But this is actually not a problem; the important thing is that seventeen is a 'semi-sacred' number in Indonesia, due to the proclamation of independence in 1945 and all the lustrous celebrations of this date ever after.

On a national level in Indonesia, *Nuzulul Qur'an* is celebrated or commemorated with the President and vice President together with cabinet members and ambassadors from Muslim countries—and parts of the Jakartan *umat*, of course—at the *Masjid Istiqlal*, or Independence Mosque, in Ja-

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[134] Gaus 2000: 46, 81, 83, 96; Madjid 2002a; Madjid 2002b.
[135] References are here to QS 8:41.
[136] Asad, whose Koranic translation and exegesis is used throughout this thesis, translates the phrase *al-malāʾikatu wa r-rūḥ* simply as "the angels."
[137] Gaus 2000: 47. *...akan mengingatkan kita pada nilai-nilai spiritual di mana Tuhan seakan-akan ikut ambil bagian atau melakukan intervensi (dalam arti positif) terhadap jalannya sejarah bangsa kita.*
[138] Gaus 2000: 46, 81; Madjid 2002a.

karta.[139] Offered on this occasion is a presidential (political) speech and one or several sermons delivered by Indonesian *ulama*. During the *Nuzulul Qur'an* commemoration in 2002, President Megawati thus spoke on the dangers of falling back into an era of (pre-Islamic) ignorance (I. *jahiliah*, A. *jāhilīyah*), and offered refined criticism of the United States and its actions in several Muslim countries during this time.[140] On this occasion, the popular 'preacher' Abdullah Gymnastiar (Aa Gym)—whom we have discussed elsewhere—also delivered one of his emotional *khutbah*. That both the presidential speech and the various *khutbah* have been highly invested with political meaning during these commemorations in Indonesia cannot be denied; I will not, however, discuss these 'oral texts' here.[141]

On a more local level, the commemorations of *Nuzulul Qur'an* and *Lailatul Qadar* take multiple forms. In my neighborhood in Yogyakarta, these events rather strictly followed the Jakartan national *Nuzulul Qur'an* example, and thus offered speeches and sermons by local politicians and religious scholars in the neighborhood mosque. In the well-attended *peringatan* (I., commemoration) of *Nuzulul Qur'an*, the splendor and grandeur of the Koran was always in focus, and the congregation was informed of how the Koranic values could be applied (I. *diamalkan*) in its daily life; how the community should interact with the Koran; how the Scripture was revealed to the prophet; how it has stood the test of history; etc, etc. The *peringatan Lailatul Qadar*, on the other hand, more often dealt with the specific problem of how to 'achieve' (I. *memperoleh*) this prosperous night, and what one might expect from it. Added to this were the ubiquitous Javanese small food-box containing a few cookies and a glass of water, which could either be consumed in the mosque during the *peringatan* itself, or taken home for later consumption. It was the local Ramadan committee that had responsibility for both the speeches and the food boxes.

In Blora, a similar pattern with mosque sermons and food boxes could be discerned. Here, however, I also found that it was all but uncommon to hold a *slametan* in connection to *Lailatul Qadar*. In these rituals—called *maleman* or occasionally *likuran*[142]—it is not prayers directed to deceased relatives that stand in focus (as in the *ruwahan* discussed above), but rather prayers of various (other) sorts, including such for the successful 'achievement' of this prosperous nights. *Slametan* in connection with *Lailatul Qadar* are often held in mosques or prayer houses.

The relationship between *Lailatul Qadar* and *Nuzulul Qur'an* is a troublesome one which only few Javanese seem to ponder upon. When I have

[139] It is worth noting that there exists no official commemoration of *Lailatul Qadar* in Indonesia.
[140] *Media Indonesia*, 2002-11-22.
[141] Interested readers are referred to, for example, *Departemen Penerangan* 1971, *Departemen Penerangan* 1977, and *Departemen Agama* 1982/83.
[142] *Maleman* (J.) is derived from the word *malem* meaning 'night' (the reference is to the night of *Lailatul Qadar*), and *likuran* is derived from *likur* which has the meaning of ten (reference is here to one of the last ten days of Ramadan in which *Lailatul Qadar* is thought to occur).

made inquiries among my Javanese friends on the matter, they have often been short of any answers, and instead proposed that I should talk to this or that *ulama* or *kyai.* As mentioned elsewhere, this has been a recurring problem for me in Java: as soon as the Javanese feel that they are talking about a religious (Islamic) issue they are only peripherally knowledgeable of, their humbleness has forced them to refer me to someone who 'knows better.' (Good) Muslims as they feel themselves to be, they are definitely not interested in providing some foreigner with inaccurate information about their already misrepresented religion—an attitude that has often been problematic. The little information I have been able to accumulate on this topic shows, however, that the *peringatan Nuzulul Qur'an* generally is thought to be the night in which the Koran was bestowed upon Muhammad (on the 17th of Ramadan), whereas *Lailatul Qadar* is one of the last odd nights of the month in which the angels come down to earth and fix destinies for the year to come and provide divine forgiveness. As this night is thought to be better than a thousand months, many Javanese Muslims indulge in several supererogatory rituals during this night. (During the regular *traweh* prayers, *sūratu l-qadr* (QS 97) is often recited during the last few nights of Ramadan.) The general idea is that *Lailatul Qadar* is the best thinkable night for accumulating *pahala* (I., divine reward).

I have repeatedly made inquires about *Nuzulul Qur'an* and *Lailatul Qadar*—and their relationship—on several large Indonesian mailing lists, including those of Nahdlatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah and Jaringan Islam Liberal (JIL). Only once, however, has my questions been taken up for discussion, and then only by one single person. This person, *Pak* Thomafi, provided me with the following understanding: the soundest date for the revelation of the Koran is the 24th of Ramadan, although some say the 17th and others the 27th. The 'original' *Nuzulul Qur'an* and *Lailatul Qadar* coincided, but there is nothing that says that so must be the case during all the subsequent years. *Lailatul Qadar* may then occur on one of the last odd nights of Ramadan, whereas he had no clue from where the Indonesian *umat* had got the idea of the 17th of Ramadan as *Nuzulul Qur'an*.[143] He did, however, imagine that it might be a result of the importance of the 17th of August (1945), when I mentioned it for him. This Thomafi also stated that commemorations of *Nuzulul Qur'an* are not limited to the Malay-Indonesian world; "Egypt, Morocco, and their neighbors" commemorate it too.[144]

The disinterest most Javanese show the (diffuse) relationship between *Nuzulul Qur'an* and *Lailatul Qadar* points to the precedence they give to ritual practice over theological speculations. Indeed, most Javanese are knowingly of 'what to do' on these two occasions.

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[143] It is noteworthy that I got a similar answer by an editor of the newspaper *Republika* when I addressed my questions to their Ramadan column in 2002. (This e-mail is kept by the author.) Cf. Ash-Shiddieqy 2000: 256.

[144] All these e-mails are kept by the author of this work.

IKTIKAF

The practice of mosque seclusion (A. *iʿtikāf*, I. *iktikaf*) during the last days of Ramadan was strongly recommended by the prophet as a means of drawing closer to God, and it is even alluded to in the Koran.[145] Such seclusion involved ritual prayer (A. *ṣalāh*), supplications (A. *duʿāʾ*), Koran recitation, *dhikr* sessions, and various other forms of supererogatory devotions. Some traditions tell of how some of the wives of the prophet accompanied him during these retreats, and others tell of how they washed and combed his hair. Women were thus encouraged to engage in *iʿtikāf* too. This condition might have contrasted to the pre-Islamic ideals and practices, but it has been argued, as mentioned elsewhere, that this kind of ritual seclusion possibly antedated the coming of Islam. Suffice it here to recall the circumstances of the prophet when he received his first revelation on Mount Ḥirāʾ, which in certain ways pretty much reminds of the later *iʿtikāf* ideal.

As a supererogatory way of drawing close to God during the month of Ramadan, this practice has never, however, received the same appreciation and number of supporters as have, for example, the *tarāwīḥ* prayers. And this is not peculiar to Southeast Asia, Indonesia, or Java, but seems to be a general Muslim phenomenon. The result of this is a wide gap between ideal and practice, or jurisprudence and sociological reality.[146]

Of the 'ordinary Muslims' I have lived among in central Java, none have performed a complete mosque seclusion reminding of the practice of the prophet. One reason for this is the lack of time that haunts Javanese Muslims during the last days of the fast. This is a time that is full of activities connected to the feast of *Idul Fitri*, and many Javanese actually spends substantial amounts of time during this last part of the month of fasting in public transportation heading 'home' (see below). Those who already are at 'home,' on the other hand, are busy preparing for the homecoming of geographically distant family members. Another possible reason for the lack of serious interest in *iktikaf* in Java is made up of the fact that this is an individual ritual. The Javanese are no loners, and to find some kind of privacy outside the own home is virtually unthinkable: sociability and social abilities are the keys to Javanese life, and there is very little room for individual activities. Indeed, too individual individuals are often regarded as suffering from some kind of disease. Another reason for the disinterest in performing *iktikaf* is, I believe, to be found in the fact that the 'ritual success' of this practice is hard to measure. The ritual success of Koranic recitation—which often is an individual ritual too—is easy to measure: one *juz* a day and you are on time. The results and success of *iktikaf*, on the other hand, are harder to grasp, and some

[145] QS 2:187.
[146] Bousquet 1978: 280.

Javanese I have spoke to on the topic have expressed their ideas on the vague (I. *samar-samar*) character of *iktikaf*. There are no clear rulings on what to be done, and most people grow tired of Koranic recitation or *zikir* sessions after a couple of hours.

Mosques are not empty, however, during the last ten days of Ramadan. Whereas it is true that attendance at the *traweh* prayers decreases in line with the evolvement of the month, no such decrease is noticeable during and after the daily obligatory day-prayers, that is *sholat luhur* (I., A. *ẓuhr*) and *sholat ashar* (I., A. *ʿaṣr*). Instead, these prayers are generally still well-attended during the last part of Ramadan compared to any other month of the year, and many Javanese also linger on in the mosque for quite some time after the prayers. Not few in fact take a nap on the mosque floor between *luhur* and *ashar*, and refers to this as a kind of *iktikaf*, but mosque officials are generally not in approval of such a practice. In some mosques, signs declaring the prohibition of mosque sleeping have been put up, in spite of the widely known fact that prohibition signs (of various sorts) have very little effect in Java.

In some mosques in Java, 'real' *iktikaf* is also practiced, but this is generally not done by 'ordinary Muslims' but rather by *pesantren* students or other highly devotional and pious people. As this work in the first hand is not concerned with the religious lives of that part of the Javanese *umat*, this is a topic that by necessity needs to be addressed in another work.

CHARITY (AND PRESTIGE)

As we have discussed above, the small amount of the *zakatulfitri* (I., A. *zakātu l-fiṭr*) has to be paid before the time of sunset on the last of Ramadan. It is of extreme importance that this 'tax' is paid in time, since—I have been told over and over again—the fast is not valid (I. *tidak sah*) in the eyes of God before this is done. And once the *maghrib* call to prayer announces the end of the fast on the last day of Ramadan, it is too late to pay the *zakatulfitri*. Javanese Muslims are thus wise to assure themselves that they have paid the special Ramadanic tithe in time. But as the last third of the month is rather busy, it happens that this sinks into oblivion. Luckily enough then, mosque youngsters usually wander around their neighborhoods during the last few nights of Ramadan asking the local residents if they have paid their *zakatulfitri* yet. If they already have paid it, "*alhamdulillah*, praise be to God." If not, "let us accept it on behalf of the local mosque." This practice ensures that very few Javanese forget to pay their tithe in time; in fact, I have never heard it happen.

Those who do not wait for the mosque youngsters to come around may choose to pay their *zakatulfitri* on their own. They can then pay directly to the local mosque—most mosques have *zakat* committees—or directly to an individual or organization. It is my experience that the Javanese prefer to

direct their Ramadanic tithe to a mosque since they put trust in the ways the money is handled there, and mosques generally have good ideas of where the money will be most needed for the moment. Nevertheless, a substantial number of Javanese also pay their tithe directly to individuals or organizations in need. Individuals here may refer to unknown beggars on the street or to poor relatives of the housemaid,[147] whereas organizations receiving *zakatulfitri* generally are orphanages with relation to one of the major Islamic organizations in the country. There is a tendency for people who are compelled to pay *fidyah* as a compensation for their absent fasting (due to pregnancy, or something else) to do this to organizations of this kind. Islamic orphanages thus receive sacks of rice, other foodstuff, clothes, and cash to an unprecedented degree during Ramadan.

The *zakatulfitri* is not the only form of charity in Ramadan. Many Muslims also spend a part of their money as *sedekah* (I., *ṣadaqah*), or supererogatory charity, during this blessed month. Some rural Javanese have taken advantage of this situation, as we saw above, and make their ways to urban centers during the fast, but in minor towns such mass movements are absent. What we find there, instead, is an increase in tithes to the already existing beggars. This, in a way, ensures that Ramadan is a 'blessed month' (I. *bulan penuh berkah*) for them too.

To spend a portion of owns belongings in the interest of the welfare of the Islamic community is a highly esteemed practice in the Islamic tradition, and an act of devotion (I. *ibadah*, A. *ʿibādah*) in itself. Both the Koran and the way of the prophet are quick to support this. Not few Javanese Muslims I have spoke to on this matter have expressed how they, with their already strained economic situation, actually cannot afford much supererogatory charity. Nevertheless, during Ramadan they become afraid that their fasting will not be accepted by God (I. *diterima Allah*) if they refuse a beggar. "How sad would it not be," a young mother mused, "if the values of fasting (I. *nilai-nilai puasa*) were refused by God (I. *ditolak Allah*) due to unfounded greed." Another friend told me that he did not dare (I. *tidak berani*) to refuse beggars during Ramadan. To provide these beggars with some coins did not settle this man's mind, however, and he often expressed his worry that he was not sincere enough (I. *kurang ikhlas*) in his ways. "What is charity without sincerity?", he once asked himself in my presence.

Of those who can spend some money on *sedekah* during Ramadan, not few like to let their surroundings know that such is the case. There is thus some 'showing off' during Ramadan in connection with the payment of supererogatory tithes, and connected to this is the concept of *gengsi* (I., pres-

[147] I once encountered an old man in Blora who walked around the town knocking on wealthy people's houses in order to ask for their *zakatulfitri*, but this is not standard procedure. Some very wealthy businessmen are, however, known to every year allocate a large sum of their money for distribution in the neighborhood. Such a happening attracts poor people from quite some distances.

tige). Few scholars on Javanese culture have drawn attention to this *gengsi*, and those who have done it have generally done so way too warily. *Gengsi* is of extreme importance to the lives of the Javanese, something which they themselves are very well aware of. To show off (I. *pamer, memamerkan*) is a way of producing *gengsi*, and wealthy Javanese are able of producing substantial amounts of prestige during the month of fasting. Javanese reactions to such showing off are multiple: some are impressed and thus reinforce the produced *gengsi*, whereas others—a minority perhaps—experiences something between dislike and disdain. The occasional Western observer should probably belong to the latter group: to listen to a wealthy woman brag about her new three hundred dollar gold necklace in front of a gathering of women who cannot even dream about a new shirt for the *Lebaran* feast concluding the fast, is pleasant in no way. However, as she brags about the new piece of jewelry in Ramadan, she also perhaps hands out some pieces of textiles or cash to the more ill-fated women. This too is showing off, and all present are impressed that she can afford to provide everybody with something useful. And the wealthy woman herself will then 'show off' once more in the presence of her likewise wealthy friends in that she will tell them all that she spent so-and-so much money on their more unfortunate sisters. And that will render her *gengsi* in those circles too.[148]

People with some public influence may attract local media when s/he spreads money around her/him in Ramadan, and newspapers thus often host pictures of politicians (or their wives), artists, and businessmen (or their wives) distributing cash money or other essentials at Muslim orphanages and similar places during this month. Apart from accumulating regular *gengsi*, this also ensures a general picture of the person involved as a pious Muslim ever ready to care for the community. When I talked to *Kyai* Hasan about this phenomenon, he sighed and recited the following:

> *in tubdū ṣ-ṣadaqāti fani^{c}immā hiy*
> *wa in tukhfuhā wa tu^{ʾ}tūhā l-fuqarā^{ʾ}afahuwa khayru lakum*
> *wa yukaffiru ^{c}ankum min sayyiātikum*
> *wa llāhu bimā ta^{c}malūna khabīr.*

He then translated it freely into Indonesian for me. An English translation reads as follows:

> If you do deeds of charity openly, it is well;
> but if you bestow it upon the needy in secret, it will be even better for you,
> and it will atone for some of your bad deeds.
> And God is aware of all that you do.[149]

[148] Note that it is not only Javanese women who are interested and preoccupied by notions of *gengsi*; Javanese men are too. Nevertheless, it is my impression that *gengsi* is more important to women than to men in Java.
[149] QS 2:271.

It was thus clear that he very much disliked the practice of showing off *sedekah*, but that it nevertheless in Koranic language was "well" to do just that. As he earlier had argued in connection with the *ruwahan* ritual meal, rituals involving money should be secret as far as possible,[150] and he told me that he was convinced of the superiority of performing such deeds in full secrecy. Secret *sedekah*, however, attracts no *gengsi* at all, and is hardly appealing to many Javanese Muslims, as a result.[151]

During the last part of Ramadan, most working Javanese receive *tunjangan hari raya* (*THR*, I., holiday alimony) by their employer. This *tunjangan* may be seen as a kind of *sedekah*, but is actually not optional for the country's employers since the Indonesian government requires from them that this alimony is paid to all their workers. The government has also set up a minimal amount to be paid in this respect.[152] Whereas the THR proper is paid in cash money, many employers also give their employees presents of different kinds during the last few days of Ramadan. These generally consist of various foodstuffs (that might come in handy as the feast of *Lebaran* is approaching): a packet of coffee, some candy, a bottle of condensed milk, a kilogram of sugar, cooking oil, a couple of bananas, etc. Such *bingkisan hari raya* (I., holiday parcels) may also be bought in any regular store during the second half of the month, and be given or sent to friends, relatives, or business associates. In the latter case, the line between holiday presents and bribes is a delicate one (as is the case with Christmas gifts in certain contexts in the West).

MUDIK

As Indonesian Muslims enter the last third of Ramadan, they start to get ready not to go to the mosque and engage in *iktikaf*, but rather to undertake a journey to their parental homes. Since many Indonesians live and work far outside their native area (I. *perantauan*), this means that millions of people will make substantial journeys during this time. Indonesians refer to this

[150] The regular Indonesian term for secret is *rahasia*. Here, however, *Kyai* Hasan used *sirriyah*, an Indonesianized form of the Arabic *sirrīyah* (secret), so as to draw religious legitimacy to his argument.

[151] The performance of the most *gengsi* generating Muslim ritual, the *hajj* or pilgrimage to Mecca, is occasionally criticized by more liberal and pragmatic Muslims. They argue that the money spent by the more than two hundred thousand Indonesian Muslims who perform the pilgrimage each year could be better spent on national education, infrastructural development, and the like. Such criticism meets little positive response, however.

[152] Generally, these governmental decrees are obeyed well in Java, but one can each year read in local newspapers about worker demonstrations and the like, caused by the inability or unwillingness of their employer to pay this *tunjangan hari raya*.

practice as *mudik*.[153] *Mudik* involves all layers of (urban) society, and it is all but uncommon that non-fasting Muslims and non-Muslims *mudik* too.

The Indonesian government always prepares and makes available large amounts of vehicles for public transports during this *mudik* time. In 2002 the Minister of Transportation (I. *Menteri Perhubungan*) could thus report that more than 30,000 busses, some 250 train cars, and 150 ships and vessels stood ready for those who would *mudik*.[154] To this should be added all the domestic flights (which inevitably are fully booked around *Lebaran*) and additional war ships that may be used should there be need to do so. Moreover, many large companies rent their own buses for their employees (and their families) during this time, so as to spare them the trouble of finding (and buying) tickets. (Needless to say, this is an appreciated Ramadan present.) Due to all these vehicles—to which should be added a substantial number of private and rented cars—the *mudik* time in Indonesia is one of chaos. Busses are full, trains are crowded, ships are delayed, and, characteristically, tickets are since long sold out. In fact, tickets are in the hands of *calo* (I., ticket scalpers) who demand outrageous sums of money for the sought-after travel documents; it is not uncommon that tickets are sold for the price of three, four, or five times the regular ditto in connection with the *Lebaran*. If one finally—and expensively—gets a ticket, new surprises await: severe traffic jams, occasional (fatal) accidents, delays, and criminality along the road. In East Java alone, *Media Indonesia* reported in 2002 that there were no less than 39 predictable troubled spots (I. *titik rawan*) for traffic accidents, 40 for traffic jams, 31 for erosion, 32 for flooding, 25 for insufficiently working bridges, 21 for damaged roads, and 30 for criminality.[155] To these numbers should be added all the non-predictable spots.

With all these hardships—to which can be added the tiring heat, humility, pollution, etc—one is surprised that Indonesians still are as eager to *mudik* as they are. For they really are eager: no *Lebaran* without *mudik*, is a common phrase in Indonesia.[156] And it seems, in fact, that many Indonesians semi-secretly enjoy to endure the hardships of *mudik*. One student friend of mine in Yogyakarta used to say that even if he could afford it, he would not take the plane back to Medan, North Sumatra. Instead, he would still choose to journey for several days with defective buses, and to cope with all the inconveniences along the road such a trip offers. "*Mudik* should be a bit tough," he said. The idea behind such a statement—which is all but rare—seems to be that the final arrival is much more enjoyable if it has been ante-

[153] Most Indonesians who work and live outside their native areas live, of course, in Jakarta. The time around *Lebaran* is thus a pleasant time to visit the capital, if there ever is one. In 2002, the daily *Kompas* reported that an estimated 11 million Jakartans (!) would *mudik* that year (*Kompas*, 2002-12-02. See also *Kompas*, 2002-12-01). This number is doubtful, however.
[154] *Kompas* 2002-12-01.
[155] *Media Indonesia*, 2002-11-20.
[156] It is interesting to note that the prolonged economic crisis has had very little effect on the practice of *mudik.*

dated by severe hardships. (In a way then, *mudik* has a similar role as Ramadanic fasting.)

There are at least two major reasons why people in Indonesia enjoy *mudik*. One is that they may meet up with relatives and friends in their parental area, and ask them for forgiveness. As Ramadan comes to an end, fasting Muslims hope for divine forgiveness, and are eager to complement that with human forgiveness too. They thus make their ways back to their places of origin in order to extend their requests for forgiveness to their parents and elderly relatives, at the same time as they—by their mere presence—render possible younger relatives to ask to be forgiven. As their already deceased relatives are likely to be buried in the same area, they may also, by way of *nyekar*, ask them for forgiveness. The second reason is frankly to show off. Most people who have worked hard for the last year in the capital or some other urban center are eager to proclaim that they have been successful. Compared to those who have stayed behind in the native area, they are indeed likely to be quite well off. *Oleh-oleh*, or (small) gifts, to all relatives and friends in the neighborhood are required by way of culture, and not few also endow their parents and closest relatives with some cash money. It is also expected that the returnees will spend substantial amounts of money while they stay in their native areas. The expectations on those homecoming from the capital (or some other major city) are thus often high, something which on many of the returnees have a stressing effect. Life in the capital has perhaps not been that promising, and there is a slight risk that they may not live up to the expectations. In order to render sufficient amounts of *gengsi* (J., prestige) back home, the pawnshop service (I. *pegadaian*) is ever ready to give a helping hand. Has one not been able to buy one's own car even after three or four years in the capital—which is often expected—, then one can perhaps rent one for a week or two and present it as one's private belonging back home. The tricks are many. What is of interest to us here is that an important part of the practice of *mudik* is the act of showing off (I. *pamer*, *memamerkan*).

This in turn has a positive effect on the economy of the rural areas of Java (and Indonesia), and it is often said that the entire rural economy of the country to a very large degree is dependent on the yearly *mudik*.

THE MONTH OF SAWAL

The month following Ramadan is that of *Sawal* (J., I. *Syawal*, A. *Shawwal*). In this month, life in Java eventually returns to 'normal,' but there are several rituals and debates taking place in the midst of the Javanese *umat* before this can happen. Some of these will be discussed below.

FIXING THE DATE OF 1 *SYAWAL*

As Ramadan enters its last week, discussions concerned with the dating of the first of *Syawal*—and hence the end of the fast—are bound to emerge in Java. To a large extent, the discussions held during the last days of *Syaban* or just preceding Ramadan are repeated in this connection: modernists argue for a calculation of the new moon in order to settle the date of *Lebaran*, whereas the traditionalists are in favor of physical sighting of it. During some years, this condition results in multiple *Lebaran* in Java, as the modernists settle for one day, and the traditionalists for another. The year 2002 (1423 AH) was such a year.

Muhammadiyah and Persis were determined that the first of *Syawal* would occur on Thursday, 5th December, whereas Nahdlatul Ulama (and other traditionalists) argued that the visual spotting (I. *rukyatul hilal*) of the moon was not possible that early. Consequently, they settled for Friday the sixth to correspond to the first of the new moon. Javanese Muslims became aware that Muhammadiyah and NU would celebrate the end of the fast during different days some time prior to *Lebaran*, and this naturally invited to debate and discussions. Again, I did not observe any direct confrontations or heated debates between modernists and traditionalists on this issue, but loud and frequent criticism was heard within both groups. As with the settlement of the first of Ramadan, the traditionalists regarded the modernists to deviate from the way of the prophet, whereas the modernists, in turn, blamed their opponents for backwardness and for being reality denying. Though these discussions remained inner-organizational issues, they still visibly disturbed the fasting community during these last days of fasting. Repeating what was said a month ago, people (in both camps) wondered how it could be that a *single* Muslim community showed such a disunited front, and why Muslims of different convictions could not agree on *one* date for the feast of *Lebaran*. Again, I also noticed that many Javanese Muslims were not aware of the underlying factors that caused this discrepancy—many just decided to blame it on the 'backwardness' of the traditionalists, or the 'oddity' of the modernists, depending on personal conviction.

As the last few days of Ramadan ideally should give birth to additional acts of devotion—including the 'searching' for *Lailatul Qadar*—and the calmness and tranquility these acts are supposed to grant Muslims, the awareness during some years that the Indonesian *umat* will celebrate the end of the fast on different days, becomes especially disturbing. Muslim leaders and *ulama*—both local and national—are, however, quick to point out that there is no problem in the division of the community in this respect, and they almost mechanically repeat the common Indonesian mantra that 'plurality is a blessing' (I. *kemajemukan adalah rahmat*). During the last days of November in 2002, an official from the Department of Religious Affairs could thus state that all Indonesian Muslim organizations could accept that there would be two days for *Lebaran* that year, since both camps had their own strong rea-

sons for determining the date of the first of *Syawal*. The daily *Kompas* quoted this official as saying that he hoped that "the Muslim community always should guard over the Islamic unity (I. *ukhuwah islamiah*) and understand and respect different opinions concerning the dating of *Idul Fitri*."[157] Plurality is a blessing. In Blora, the local Religious Affairs office issued a decree of eight points concerning the difference in determining the date for *Idul Fitri*, and these eight points all came down to one issue: to respect the multiplicity of interpretations and convictions in respect to the dating of *Lebaran*.[158] Plurality is a blessing. The head of the local branch of *Majelis Ulama Indonesia* (MUI) in Blora, KH Mucharor Ali, also stated that differences in respect to the dating of the end of the fast should pose no problems to the Muslim community,[159] and similar statements were issued by leaders of various Islamic organizations and institutions around Java during the last days of Ramadan this year. Plurality is a blessing; however, it is well disguised, and indeed so well disguised that it does not even appear to be a blessing to a majority of the Muslims in Java.

Modernist Muslims in Blora made no big deal out of the fact that they celebrated the end of the fast one day prior to the majority of the Bloran (traditionalist) Muslims. In fact, they held back on their celebrations and tried to not disturb those Muslims who were still fasting. *Takbiran* (discussed below) were thus not broadcast by way of the mosque amplifiers during the night prior to the first of *Syawal*, but only recited inside the mosques and prayer houses. There were further no parties of celebrating Muslims going around town expressing their joy (I. *takbir keliling*; see also below).[160] Instead, the festivities were held in quietude in the modernist mosques, and I consequently heard no traditionalist complaining over the activities of the modernists' *Lebaran* celebrations. During the day of *Idul Fitri* itself, the *sholat id* (see below) was performed without much noise, and regular (Ramadanic) life pretty much continued for the majority of the Bloran population during this day. Naturally, some celebrating Muslims were seen as they made their way from one point in town to another, but things stayed pretty calm. I also noticed that modernists waited to congratulate and ask for forgiveness their traditionalist friends and neighbors until Friday, when the traditionalists also had broken the fast. A large part of the modernists thus celebrated *Idul Fitri* with at least as much enthusiasm and joy during the Friday—although they performed their *sholat id* only once (on Thursday morning).

I should here also mention that the environment often has a determining effect on the day chosen for the *Lebaran* celebration. One (traditionalist) family in Blora used to tell me of how one of their relatives who lived in

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[157] *Kompas* 2002-11-30.
[158] *Suara Merdeka* 2002-11-30a.
[159] *Suara Merdeka* 2002-11-30b.
[160] In Jakarta, the police was ready to prevent Muslim modernists to form such circulating *takbiran* parties (*Kompas* 2002-12-04); no such preventative actions were needed in Blora.

West Java one year arrived in Blora during (as the traditionalists perceived of it) the last day of Ramadan with a snack in his hand. They were startled: why did *Mas* Pranoto not fast? *Mas* Pranoto too was perplexed: why did his family still fast? As the story unfolded it became clear the geographically distant relative had indeed fasted the entire month, but that he, as he now lived in a modernist environment, had performed the *sholat id* that same morning in West Java, and then immediately boarded a bus heading for Blora. What his new environment thus regarded as the fist of *Syawal* was nothing but the last of Ramadan to his old family's environment. In spite of this condition, he was still a traditionalist by conviction; it was only his environment that had caused him to break the fast after twenty-nine days. As Ramadan was over for him, he did not join the *id* prayers the following morning, but he did prepare for a second *Lebaran* feast that day.

TAKBIRAN

When the sun goes down on the last of Ramadan, the fast is over. This is proclaimed after the *maghrib* prayers from every mosque by way of the *takbiran*:

> *allāhu akbar, allāhu akbar, allāhu akbar*
> *lā ilāha ilā llāhu wa llāhu akbar*
> *allāhu akbar, wa lillāhi l-ḥamd*
>
> God is greater, God is greater, God is greater
> There is no god but God and God is greater
> God is greater, and all praise is due to God.[161]

As I have mentioned above, the Javanese proclaim this formulae from sunset until the performance of the *sholat id* some time after sunrise the following day. The entire night is referred to by the expression *malem takbiran* (J., the *takbiran* night). This night is a joyous night with some sad elements, and many Javanese Muslims I have talked to about the *takbiran* have acknowledged that they have a hard time trying to describe their feelings during this night. On the one hand, they say, they are happy that the fast is over, as it is rather demanding to fast for thirty days in a row and as divine forgiveness and feelings of *takwa* are hoped for at this time. One the other hand, many also feel sad that they have to leave Ramadan behind and go on with their lives. There are no guarantees that any of us will live to see the next Ramadan, and those omitted *traweh* prayers and Koran recitation classes are consequently deeply regretted. These regrets and sad feelings are, however, by large defeated by their joyous counterparts during this night, and the night is

[161] There exists at least two longer 'versions' of this *takbiran* formula. In Bosnia, I have been told, the initial *allāhu akbar* is repeated only twice (Ask Gasi, personal communication).

at times referred to as the night of victory in Indonesian (I. *malam kemenangan*).

The only vague Koranic reference to the *takbiran* is to be found in QS 2:185 which says that the Muslim community should extol God and render its thanks unto Him. There are as for as I know no prophetic tradition that speaks of something that could be said to resemble the Javanese *takbiran*; it is only reported that Muhammad used to recite this formulae for himself as he walked to the *ʿīd* prayers. This differs from the Javanese case, where the takbiran formula is recited through the mosque amplifiers and reaches most Javanese homes for some thirteen hours consecutively.[162] It is the male members of the community that take turns of reciting this, and especially children who have interiorized the formula are given prominent places in this enterprise. As this is the joyous night of victory, the *takbiran* cries remain enthusiastic throughout the night, and perhaps even escalate during the last few morning hours. For those few places in Java where a mosque is far away from one's house, special *takbiran* cassettes are sold in towns throughout the island (and by some odd reason, new 'editions' appear each year).

Mention should here also be made of the circling *takbiran* parties (I. *takbir keliling*). Partaking in these are usually younger men, who thus go around town on their vehicles (bicycles, motorcycles, cars, trucks, etc.) honking and screaming the *takbiran* formula. Often, groups of rural youth make it into the towns during this night, and there is thus a (negative) 'rustic' atmosphere over it, according to some (urban) Javanese. In Jakarta, streets in the city center are crowded during the night of *takbiran*—despite the great number of Jakartans who have gone *mudik*—, and the official celebrating of this night is commonly held at the National Monument in the middle of the capital with, amongst others, the President and the vice President present. In 2002, the popular Aa Gym delivered a sermon there, and various other artists also helped to make the night full of joy.[163]

SHOLAT ID

That the (physical) fast is over is first felt in the morning of the first of *Sawal*. People can 'sleep in' till 5 a.m. or so, and once they are up and have performed their *sholat subuh*, they may eat a plate of steaming rice and some side dish. It feels odd to have a meal while the sun is up during the first few post-Ramadanic days, many Javanese Muslims say, and I can only agree. What has not been 'allowed' during the last thirty days is suddenly permissible. Indeed, it is categorized as *sunnah* to have something to eat before the

[162] When the modernist Muslims in Java celebrated *Lebaran* one day prior to the rest of the Javanese Muslim community, however, the *takbiran* was recited only inside the modernist mosques and homes (without amplification), as mentioned above.
[163] *Kompas* 2002-12-09.

performance of the *id* prayers. However, as it is reported in the *hadits* material that the prophet used to have only a snack on the morning of the first of *Sawal*, many Javanese Muslims eat with moderation before the congregational prayers, only to have a substantial meal as they come home again. But let us return to the early morning hours now.

While having that minor snack as the sun rises over the horizon, the *takbiran* cries from the mosques still go on and seem to compete with each other as their time is running out. In the homes of Javanese Muslims, fervent activity is to be expected during these hours. It is customary to take a bath (i.e., to make the major ritual ablution; A. *ghusl*) before going to the congregational prayers, and, indeed, almost every Javanese take a bath this morning, just as they do during all other mornings. The whole family is thus supposed to bath before leaving for the prayers, and all members should have something small to eat before they dress themselves up in their best of clothes. Certainly, the clothes to be worn on this morning is a major issue in Java throughout Ramadan, and an overwhelming majority of the Javanese *umat* is of the opinion that one should bear newly bought clothes on this morning (and during the rest of the day).[164] Consequently, much time, energy, and money is spent during the last week of Ramadan to buy new complete outfits for the entire family: from hats and veils to sandals and high heels. Stores and markets are ever ready to support this Javanese tradition, and special Ramadan discounts catering to it are to be expected during the entire month of fasting. The commercialization of Ramadan is obvious in this respect. Of course, critique of it is heard, but nevertheless easily drowned. The critics of the tradition of bearing new clothes on *Lebaran* draw attention to the *hadits* that has it that Muhammad only said that one should bear one's *best* clothes during this feast, and not necessarily one's *newest.* Critics usually also point to how the sought after feeling of equality of Muslims during the *sholat id* is disturbed by the fact that an unannounced competition (playing for *gengsi*, prestige) goes on simultaneously. Despite this critique, most Javanese Muslims—urban, at least—show up on this morning with entire new outfits. White is the favorite color, as it symbolizes the alleged purity *Idul Fitri* offers.

Let us return to our topic again. On the morning of the first of *Sawal*, Javanese Muslims thus get dressed in their finest (and latest) clothes. Newly washed *sajadah* (I., prayer rugs) are brought forward, and the characteristically black velvet cap (I. *peci*) adorn the heads of most Javanese males. Additional old newspapers are also collected hurriedly, as the grass where the prayers are to be performed still might be wet from the dew. Grass? Yes, due to the unprecedented popularity of the *id* prayers—everyone *is* there—mosques do not have the capability to house the entire community during this

[164] A similar state of affairs has been recorded in Morocco (Buitelaar 1996: 72).

morning. Consequently, large outdoor sport arenas are generally made use of.[165] Even these are crammed during this morning.

Sholat id in Blora. Note the balloons. Compare with the picture on page 297.

As all family members have taken their bath, had a snack, dressed up in their best outfit, and collected their prayer rug and some newspaper, it is time to depart for the prayers themselves. Amazingly, the time for the execution of the *id* prayers is not standardized in Java, and severe confusion exists each year. Sometime they are performed at 7 a.m. and sometime half an hour earlier or later. Local newspapers generally state the exact time the day before in small notices, but it seems as if these notices only rarely are read by Javanese Muslims, as the last day of *Pasa* is full of activities. Times also have a tendency to change without prior notice in Java; the value of small announcements like these are thus questionable. Location too has a tendency to change without prior notification. In 2002, a large portion of the Bloran *umat* was thus startled as it arrived at the sport arena where the *id* prayers 'always' are held: no one was there except other confused parts of the Muslim community dressed in their new clothes. As it happened, the *sholat id* had been trans-

[165] Note however that the 'official' Indonesian *sholat id* in Jakarta, with the President and other officials, take place in the immense *Masjid Istiqlal*. When I in 1999 happened to be in neighboring Bali during the end of Ramadan, I found that the *id* prayers there were also conducted in a mosque. This was due to the fact that the entire but small Muslim community I found in Southeast Bali (close to Candidasa) could be housed in the village mosque. The prayers were thus performed there, and then the entire village had a festive meal together at the mosque verandah. The atmosphere there was very familiar and emotionally loaded as everybody knew each other (expect the odd foreigner who joined in). It is noteworthy that a substantial part of the village population was made up of Javanese Muslims.

ferred that year to the town square (I. *alun-alun*) in front of the great mosque in Blora, notification of which had gone largely unobserved. The consequence of this was that a substantial number of Muslims did not make it in time up to the new location, and thus missed out on the entire *id* prayers. I had the opportunity to go by car at that occasion and thus arrived at the *alun-alun* just before the commencement of the *sholat*. On the way up there we had to pass many disappointed faces of people who had realized they would never make it. As we returned home after the prayers, the same faces had become even more disappointed.

Whether the *sholat id* in Java is performed in an outdoor sports arena or in the town square—and its adjacent streets—one thing is to be expected: crowds of people. From both Morocco and Jordan, it has been reported that the performance of the *ʿīd* prayers is an entirely male affair: female presence at this occasion is sought after in vain.[166] In Java, the situation is different. It is taken for granted that both women and men attend the ritual prayer, and reference is often made to the following tradition from the collection of Bukhārī:

> Narrated Um ʻAtiya:
> We used to be ordered to come out on the Day of ʻId and even bring out the virgin girls from their houses and menstruating women so that they might stand behind the men and say Takbir along with them and invoke Allah along with them and hope for the blessings of that day and for purification from sins.[167]

In addition, most Javanese Muslims are of the opinion that males and females are totally equal in respect to ritual performance and the ability to obtain divine blessings through these.[168] Consequently, at this ritual occasion approximately fifty percent of the attendants are female. (Even menstruating Muslims attend the ritual location at this moment, although they may not join the actual *id* prayer.[169])

When arriving at the location chosen for the performance of the *sholat id*, the first thing one notices is that *everybody* seems to be there. A crowd of well dressed and fragrant Muslims has already arrived, and more people turn up every minute. Traffic chaos is to be expected albeit the presence of a substantial number of (non-Muslim) police officers. Cars, motorcycles, and bicycles stand parked in every (im)possible location. Friends and relatives who meet during these pre-*sholat* minutes shake hands while asking each other for

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[166] Buitelaar 1993: 74, 95, Antoun 1968b: 99.
[167] ḤB 2,15,88. Cf. ḤB 2,15,91.
[168] See QS 33:35 which seems to support this view.
[169] The idea that menstruating women better not engage in certain ritual activities is attested from around the world. In some places menstruating women nevertheless secretly partake in these ritual activities—perhaps in the lady's room instead of in the temple (Kristina Myrvold, personal communication). I seriously doubt that any menstruating Muslim in Java would act in a similar matter, since they are convinced that their ritual activities not would be *sah* (I., valid) under such circumstances.

forgiveness and wishing happy holidays. The atmosphere is festival-like—something which is supported further by the presence of helium balloon vendors catering to the wishes of children—and there seems to be a smile on every face one meets. (These smiles need not, however, be generated by the conviction that divine rewards and blessings are in the coming, but may just as much be caused by the joy many people feel as they wear new clothes in the presence of a crowd of people who pay attention to them.) The second thing one notices—during some years, in some places—is that men and women freely mix with each other in this ritual location: there exists no ritual division between males and females. Instead, people tend to be grouped together on a family basis. A woman may thus perform the *id* prayers with her husband and children to the right of her, for example, whereas to her left another man and his family are to be found. Such mixing of the sexes is never to be found in mosques in Java. How frequent this mixing is in Java in connection with the *sholat id* is unfortunately unknown to me. More common is it perhaps that the *id* ritual location is divided in a mosque-like way, with women at the back.

A third condition that calls for attention is the fact that it does not rain. For, indeed, it does not. This is often commented upon by the Javanese who regard this to be a divine blessing—what a mess it would be if several thousand *sholat id* performing Muslims were caught in rainfall! No, God would never allow this to happen. During the four *Idul Fitri* I have spent in Indonesia there has been no rain, despite the fact that this holiday (or, holy day) occurred during the rainy season these years. Several friends have also told me that they cannot recall a rainy *Lebaran* as long as they have lived. I have not cared to try to verify that it has not rained on the first of *Sawal* during the last fifty years or so in Java, but just noticed the general Javanese idea of God's relation to this day: Muslims keep it to be a holy day, and so does God Himself. To let rain fall on the prostrating believers would be unfeasible for Him.

The *sholat id* in itself differs slightly from other *sholat*. It shares some common characteristics with the Friday prayer (I. *sholat jum'at*), but also holds its own special features. Its first delineating feature is that it is not preceded by the call to prayer, the *adzan* (I., A. *adhān*). Instead, the muezzin 'suddenly' stands up and declares that the prayer is about to begin by the words: *aṣ-ṣalātu jāmiᶜah* (A., let us pray congregationally). In the town square in Blora, however, even this is preceded by a speech by the local regent (I. *bupati*). I use the term 'speech' here since the *bupati* does not offer a sermon (I. *khutbah*) in the regular sense of the term. Nevertheless, the speech of the *bupati* is colored by religious issues and punctuated by recurring *Allahu akbar*. Whereas in the Friday prayer the sermon is offered before the actual *sholat*, the *sholat id* procedure offers the reverse: *sholat* first, and then the sermon. This is in line with the tradition of the prophet according to several *hadits*, and also the reason we cannot talk about the 'sermon' of the *bupati* in this respect. I have not been able to record the *Idul Fitri* speech of the

bupati in Blora, and neither have I made notes of it. In fact, I have hardly listened to it. This has a twofold reason: first, the *bupati* holds his speech as people (including me) arrive at the location. Focus is thus not on the regent's speech, but rather on finding a place for one's prayer rug in the middle of the crowd while shaking hands with those already present in one's vicinity. Secondly, the speaker systems used at occasions like these rarely have the ability to convey the voice of the speaker other than to those sitting in the first few rows. Thus, not many actually listen to the speeches and sermons delivered at events like these.

Sholat id in Blora. Note the mixing of the sexes here (and the zebra cross).

Let us return to the prayer proper. As the muezzin announces that the *sholat* is about to begin, the entire congregation and the *imam* rises. As always, ritual prayer like these are preceded by individually and silently uttered intentions (I. *niat*) before the *imam* begins the formal ritual by proclaiming the *takbiratul ihram*: *Allahu akbar*. Instead of proceeding to the recitation of *Al Fatihah*, however, the *imam* repeats the *takbiratul ihram* as many as six times (totaling seven) and the congregation follows. In between these statements, all present are supposed to recite *subḥāna llāh, wa l-ḥamdulillāh, wa lā ilāha illā llāh, wa llāhu akbar* (A., glory be to God, and all praise is due to God, and there is no god but God, and God is greater), which is a well-known *zikir* in Java. The *sholat id* consists of only two *raka'at*—as the Friday prayer—and it is *sunnah* for the *imam* to recite *sūratu l-ᶜalā* during the first

raka'at and *sūratu l-ghāshiyah* during the second,[170] as I have mentioned elsewhere in this thesis. Before the second *raka'at* commences, however, the *iman* is supposed to state *Allahu akbar* five times, and the congregation is supposed to follow the *imam* in this respect.

Immediately after the *sholat id* in Blora. Note that some women already have lifted their veils. Note also the parked motorcycles in the middle of the congregation.

The ritual prayer is over when the *imam* states the *salam*—first to his right, and then to his left. A few seconds after that, smoke from cigarettes become visible at numerous spots in the crowd as the heavily nicotine addicted Javanese males have their first cigarette during daylight hours for a whole month. Another thing that becomes visible is the hair of Muslim females who simply take off their ritual dresses (I. *mukena*) immediately after the prayer. Of course, those who wear *jilbab* (I., veil) regularly do not join in this group, but it is remarkable, I think, that so many 'non-veilers' without delay take of the *mukena* at this occasion: they are still at the ritual location, and they are still expected to listen to the post-*sholat* sermon.

Talking about this sermon, or *khutbah*, it begins a few whiles after the abovementioned *salam* (the intermittent time is used for supplications) and should be—and is—punctuated by frequent *Allahu akbar*. As with the pre-*sholat* speech of the *bupati*, very few actually listen to this sermon. This is in part due to the insufficiency of the speaker system, and in part to the fact that

[170] QS 87 and QS 88 respectively. Muslim (2001: 98) also mentions *sūrat qāf* (QS 50) and *sūrat al-qamar* (QS 54) in this respect, as noticed above in the chapter on Ramadanic media.

a substantial number of Muslims in the congregation start to get ready to leave, and indeed eventually leave the ritual location before the sermon is completed. To some Javanese Muslims this is highly disturbing. They argue that the spiritual shower (I. *siraman rohani*) the *id* sermon offers should be more appealing than lukewarm *tempe* at home. They also tend to regard the *sholat* and the *khutbah* as a single entity that cannot be separated just like that; if one performs the *sholat* one should also listen to the *khutbah.* Despite these complaints and critical voices, a majority of the *umat* has already left the town square or the sports arena when the sermon comes to its end. A friend from my *kampung* in Blora formulated his early departure from the town square in the following two questions: "Why should I linger on there when I could not even hear the words of the *khatib*? And why should I not try to escape the heat?"[171] It is thus very clear that Javanese Muslims attach far more importance to the *sholat* than to the *khutbah*. In fact, the *sholat* is treated as it was compulsory (I. *wajib*), and not supererogatory (I. *sunat*), as it is. If a Javanese Muslims would perform only one *sholat* during the entire year, s/he would probably pick the *sholat id*.

As people make their ways back home, they can expect at least three things. First, that a bunch of poor people will greet them with their beggar bowls as they leave the ritual location. The Ramadanic generosity usually remains alive some time after *Idul Fitri* and the first of *Sawal* is a strategic day for asking for charity in Java. Before and after the *sholat*, paper boxes for *sedekah* also circulate in the congregation. Secondly, traffic chaos is to be expected, as thousands of people try to get back home. Thirdly, one can also expect that at least some Muslims do not take the same way back to their homes as they came. This is motivated by a *hadits* in which it is reported that Muhammad used to take different ways to and from the ritual location on this day. The motivation for this, in turn, is that one wants to meet as many different people as possible during this day in order to ask for their forgiveness and wish them happy holidays.

POST-RAMADANIC *NYEKAR*

Not all Muslims go directly to their homes after the *sholat id*, however, but rather make their ways to the graveyards. They thus go *nyekar* (J.), a practice that has been described earlier in this chapter. As during the pre-Ramadanic *nyekar*, families or parts of them go to the graveyard together, and there are consequently no special female visits to cemeteries in Java, as reported from other parts of the Muslims world.[172] There is no ritual division of the sexes in Javanese graveyards.

[171] To sit under the direct sun in Java, even if it is only 7.30 a.m., is rather tiresome.
[172] Antoun 1968b: 99.

The underlying idea of visiting the graves of deceased relatives immediately after the *id* prayer is to ask them (the relatives) for forgiveness. The Javanese practice of asking friends and relatives for forgiveness on *Idul Fitri* is thus not limited to people who are still alive. Post-Ramadanic *nyekar* in Java can consequently be said to represent *silaturahmi* with the deceased. As such, it is of immense importance to large segments of the Javanese *umat.* The first of *Sawal* is not, however, the only possible day for engaging in such activities: cemeteries in Java are frequently visited during the entire first week after the conclusion of the fast.

SILATURAHMI

Those Javanese Muslims who do not head directly for the graveyards after the performance of the *sholat id* are most likely to make their ways back to their homes. There, members of the (extended) family ask each other for forgiveness. This cannot be done in just any way, but has to follow the Javanese idea of hierarchical relationships. It is thus expected that younger siblings ask their older dittos for forgiveness first, and that wives turn to their husbands and ask them for forgiveness before any male initiative (regardless of their age relationship) are taken. Cousins of the same age will have to determine who will ask for forgiveness first by means of their—or their parent's—social (and thereby economical) status. As long as these initial procedures are followed, there is nothing that keeps the older siblings and husbands to turn to their younger siblings and wives respectively in order to ask them for forgiveness after that. In contemporary Java, this indeed seems to be the rule rather than the exception. Elder informants have recalled that this would be very rare only for fifty years ago when hierarchical social structures were much stronger than they are today, however.

The practical asking for forgiveness can take various forms. The most 'simple' variant is made up of a regular handshake and the utterance (from both parts) of one of the following phrases: *mohon maaf lahir dan batin* or *minal 'aidin wal faizin.* The first of these is a standard Indonesian phrase, which literally means '[I] ask [you for] forgiveness, [both for my] outer and inner [wrongdoings towards you].' The words *lahir* (A. *ẓāhir*) and *batin* (A. *bāṭin*) are frequently employed in Sufi circles, but are used by the entire Muslim community in Java in connection with *Idul Fitri*. The second phrase mentioned above is an Indonesianized form of the Arabic *min al-ᶜāᵓidīn wa l-fāᵓizīn*, which in turn is an abbreviation of *jaᶜalanā llāhu wa iyyākum mina l-ᶜāᵓidīn wa ᵓl-fāᵓizīn*. As mentioned above, Suyuti translates the latter term as "May God include us all among those who return pure, and succeeds in defeating the lustful desires" (I. *Semoga Allah menjadikan kita semua termasuk*

orang-orang yang kembali suci dan menang melawan hawa nafsu).[173] Recalling that some Indonesian authors are critical of this phrase—due to its 'uncertain origin'—the Arabic greeting *taqabbal Allāhu minnā wa minkum* (A., may God accept our good deeds, and yours too) may also be heard in some circles. The two most commonly used *Lebaran* greetings (I. *tahniah*, A. *taḥīyah*) in Java are, however, the two first mentioned in this discussion.

A slightly more *alus* (J., refined) way of asking for forgiveness is to extend both one's hands in the required handshake while bowing somewhat. This is suitable for people that are (much) older than oneself, or more—in some way or another—respected in society, but with whom one does not have an intimate relation. Even more *alus* would it be to bow so low that one may kiss the hand of the other person, or at least let it touch one's forehead. This is only suitable for people with whom one has a personal and intimate relationship. Famous *ulama* and *kyai* are exempted from this rule, however, and their hands are surely often kissed or made touch the foreheads of 'common people.' The idea behind this is that the specific *kyai* or *ulama* is thought to possess blessings (J. *berkat*) that may emanate from him and be bestowed upon whoever touches him.

The most perfect and refined way of asking for forgiveness at *Lebaran* in Java is by way of a practice referred to as *sungkeman* (J.). The person that will be the object of this ritual (J. *dipunsungkemi*) will sit on a chair, whereas the one that actively will perform the ritual (J. *nyungkemi*) kneels or even prostrates on the floor before the former. He (the one kneeling) then extends his two hands and lays his head down on the knees—or, alternatively, at the feet as is customary at the royal courts in Yogyakarta and Solo—of the one who *dipunsungkemi*. This done, he formulates his asking for forgiveness in his most refined Javanese, which then is answered by the one sitting by a small speech that may take various forms. In this speech, the one that just has been *dipunsungkemi* may also ask for forgiveness, but it is more common perhaps just to extend a sort of supplication in Javanese for the one kneeling. In Blora, *sungkeman* is not so widespread a practice as it is in Yogyakarta. In those families it is still practiced, it is generally limited to spouses (wives to husbands) and intimate relatives (the younger generation to parents and parents-in-law, and possible grandparents).

Sungkeman is very emotional, and intense weeping is all but uncommon in Java during *Lebaran*. Most people I have talked to regarding this topic have stated that they feel unsure of what comes over them at the moment they *nyungkemi*. Many of them have expressed that they are overcome by a surprising feeling of sincerity at this moment, and that they host feelings of real regret regarding the conscious and unconscious wrongdoings they might have conducted towards friends and family. This combined then with

[173] Suyuti 1996: 135. See also Wagtendonk (1968: 2) who says that the feast concluding the annual fast is characterized by, amongst other things, people wishing each other "*djaʿalanā Allāh min al-ʿāʾidīn al-fāʾizīn al-maqbūlīn. kull ʿam wa antum bi khayr.*"

the fact that the month long fast just has ended symbolically in the *sholat id* and that this day of 'purity' has been waited upon for (perhaps) the entire year, makes the *sungkeman* occasion invested with a variety of emotions.[174] (It may be noted here that public weaping is extremely rare in Java, and regarded as discordant with Javanese fine etiquette. That crying during the *sungkeman* is accepted is probably due to its—and the entire month's—liminal character; this will be further discussed in the concluding chapter of this work.)

As can be expected, some critical voices of the practice of *sungkeman* exist in Java. These voices generally argue that the *sungkeman* ritual expresses a hierarchical order that does not exist in Islam. Furthermore, there are no reports in the *hadits* literature—let alone in the Koran—that the prophet engaged in any *sungkeman*-like ritual. Instead, he treated all believers as equals, and so should those walking on the straight path do too. Any Javanese (or other local) tradition that prevents the realization of this principle should be immediately abandoned, it is argued occasionally from modernist camps. Interestingly, those defending the *sungkeman* also draw attention to the fact that it is a purely Javanese tradition expressing Javanese ideas of refined etiquette (J. *unggah-ungguh*), but they regard this to be something positive. By practicing the *sungkeman* ritual every year, Javanese culture and values—and with that, Javanese identity—will be preserved, they say. Moreover, there is nothing 'un-Islamic' in showing respect to one's parents and elderly relatives. On the contrary, they argue, the prophetic traditions are soon to support the view, for example, that children should pay respect to their parents.

Before we leave the topic of *Idul Fitri* handshakes and the practice of *sungkeman*, we should also note how some Muslim females arrange their greetings with men. For many women in Java, there is no real problem in shaking hands with fellow Muslims of the opposite sex. Many other, however, are not interested in any kind of physical contact with men (other than those who have blood- or marital relations with them), and they have consequently developed a kind of non-physical 'handshake' for this purpose. Instead of extending their right hand when meeting a male member of the *umat*, they choose to extend both their hands with their palms facing each other. The man is then 'forced' to do a similar gesture, and when their fingertips are just about to meet, both of them retract their hands. As they do this, they also generally lift them up: either just slightly visibly or right up to their own faces. It is noteworthy that some—not few, in fact—females make a compromise between the 'regular' handshake and this latter variant. For them, it seems that the regular handshake is 'too male' in character, whereas the non-physical ditto is 'too extreme.' They thus extend both their hands with their

[174] The year I spent *Idul Fitri* in Bali, I observed no regular *sungkeman*. Instead, the entire population of the small village shook hands and embraced each other outside the mosque right after the *id* prayer. An overwhelmingly majority wept, or at least had tears in their eyes.

palms facing each other, but when the fingertips are about to meet, they do not withdraw them but rather let them physically meet the hands of the opposite sex before they conduct a similar uplifting gesture as described above.

Enough said about handshakes for the moment. As people have returned home after the *id* prayers—perhaps with a *nyekar* stop on the road—and have asked members of the core family for forgiveness, hunger suddenly sets in. As the female members of the household have been rather busy the last few days, there is no shortage of delicious food, sweets and cookies at this moment. A standard Javanese meal on this joyous day is *opor ayam* and *lontong*, that is, pieces of chicken cooked in coconut milk served with rice steamed in tubes of banana leafs. Also specific to this day is the *ketupat*, a kind of rice cake that has been boiled in a box of plaited coconut leaves. In addition, sweets and various cookies are to be found aplenty in almost every home in Java during *Lebaran*. Several large boxes, each hosting a different sort of sweets, are sure to be found on the table in the *ruang tamu* (I., room reserved for guests) in Javanese homes, and friends, relatives, and neighbors are encouraged to eat their fills.

Once this meal has been consumed, neighbors go around the neighborhood, wishing each other happy holidays and asking for each other's forgiveness. For this former purpose yet another greeting is made use of, namely *sugeng riyadi* (J.) which literally means 'happy holidays.' Ideally, younger people should go to the house of those who are older, but virtually all inhabitants of a certain *kampung* walk around the vicinity on this day and make visits at friends' houses as they walk by. Differences in age and social position are thus rather neglected, although it is expected that all inhabitants of a certain neighborhood pay a visit to the 'village head' (I. *kepala rukun tangga*). Approaching a home, one makes use of either the Javanese expression *kula nuwun* (J., excuse me; anybody home?) or the Arabic *as-salāmu ᶜalaykum* (A., peace upon you), which then is answered by either *mangga, mangga* (J., please, please [come in]) or *wa ᶜalaykum salām* (A., and upon you peace [too]). Then, after having said the customary holiday greetings, the host bids the guests to sit down, whereupon the lids from the cookie boxes are lifted and the guests invited to try out the sweets. Soon, glasses of tea or some soft drink also appear. Before long however—usually only after a couple of minutes—it is time to move on to other neighbors, and the guests bid their farewells. As the guests leave, new guests arrive, and all present exchange holiday greetings and ask for each other's forgiveness (whether one is formerly acquainted with each other or not). Naturally, some homes are visited by several families at the same time, and this often leads to the establishment of new bonds of friendship.

No one is exempted from this neighborhood *silaturahmi*; previous grudges are forgotten when former enemies shake hand, and notions of prestige and social positions are temporarily forgotten. In fact, it is not uncommon even for non-Muslims to partake in this ritual. It took me by some surprise when my family and I in Blora during my first *Lebaran* there headed in

the direction of a house known to be the home of a Christian family. This will be awkward, I recall thinking as someone in the party extended the *kula nuwun* greeting. The greeting was, however, answered and we exchanged the common holiday greetings and were offered cookies and tea just as in any other Javanese (Muslim) home. It is thus safe to conclude that *Lebaran* is not an exclusive Muslim feast in Java. Talking about Muslim-Christian relations we should also note that some Muslims families send *ruwahan* food boxes to their Christian friends, something which then is reciprocated with Christmas food boxes to Javanese Muslims in late December. The celebrations of feasts of this kind are thus not restricted to adherents of a specific religious tradition, although the participation in such feasts differs among Javanese of different religious orientations. For a Christian Javanese, the participation in *Idul Fitri* is probably restricted to offering cookies and sweets to visiting Muslim friends and relatives—it is not uncommon that the extended Javanese family hosts more than one religious orientation—, whereas a Muslim Javanese will restrict her participation in the Christmas celebration to receiving *slametan* food boxes and extending her Merry Christmas greetings to Christian acquaintances.

As Javanese extended families are sure to be quite large, it is unlikely that all its members will inhibit the same *kampung*. Consequently, when the neighborhood *silaturahmi* has been concluded, it has become time to visit more distant relatives. In the families I know in Blora and Yogyakarta, such extended family celebrations of *Lebaran* rotate each year according to an agreed upon scheme. For example, if the head—which often is the oldest living member—of this extended family has ten (grown up) children, then they will arrange the family feast every tenth year so as to ensure that everybody take an active part in these arrangements.

The *Idul Fitri* family feasts are made up of the same basic elements as the neighborhood *silaturahmi*: holiday greetings, food, and drink. As they go on for several hours, however, rice and several side dishes are added to the sweets and the cookies, and the otherwise short greetings are extended to conversations and discussions. Plays and games are often an integral part of these feasts, and a karaoke set may make present a special festive atmosphere as Javanese love to sing (and are not ashamed to do so). In some families, one member states the intent of the get-together—which is to celebrate the end of the month long fast, and to guard over the bonds of friendship strived for in every family—, and recites a supplication which all present punctuate by the characteristic *amin*. There are thus some similarities with a general Javanese *slametan*, and the purpose of this jamboree is often said to be to ensure that the whole extended family may be granted tranquility (J. *slamet*) and harmony (J. *rukun*).

A favorite part of these family conventions for children is what is called *salam tempel* (J.), that is, the distribution of new banknotes on behalf of parents and aunts and uncles. As children see that one of the grown-ups come with a bunch of fresh banknotes in his hand, they immediately swarm around

him, eager to lay their hands of some *rupiah*. There is generally no large amount of money involved in this process, and the children are most likely to have spent all of it before long in the closest neighborhood candy stall. For the adults, however, the distribution of this money may accumulate some *gengsi* (J., prestige) and may even be seen as a yardstick according to which last year's success can be measured. (It is perhaps noteworthy that the high demand on *fresh* banknotes in connection to *Lebaran* in Java has given birth to a group of entrepreneurs at bus- and train stations who sell, for example, nine totally fresh banknotes of one thousand *rupiah* each for the price of ten thousands.)

The extended family parties at *Lebaran* are generally over at noon or just after—when the heat really sets in—and people return to their homes again. During the afternoon, visits to friends are common. As Indonesia is a huge country, however, and as Javanese people are likely to have relatives and friends outside Java, physical meetings are not always possible during *Idul Fitri*. Taking into consideration the high rates for inter-state telephone calls in the country—together with the fact that telephone lines are far from drawn everywhere—, we should not be surprised that *Kartu Lebaran* (I., *Lebaran* greeting cards) are common. Let me shortly describe three such cards here. The first is the simplest one as the background is made up of a 'rainbowish' pattern, and the Indonesian text is limited to "*Selamat Idul Fitri*. *Minal aidin wal Faizin*. *Maaf Lahir and Batin*." It is thus just a happy holiday card that reproduces two of the most common *Lebaran* greetings (see the discussion above). The front page also hosts the Arabic text *al-ḥamdu lillāhi rabbi l-ᶜālamīn* (written in Arabic). This is a Koranic quote that in English may be rendered as "All praise is due to God alone, the Sustainer of all the worlds."[175] As one opens the card one finds the same greeting repeated again, but here accompanied by the phrase "May God's welfare and blessings always accompany us."[176]

The second card hosts a picture of a bouquet of flowers with the Arabic *Allāh* written in the middle of it, and the same greetings as on the first card. It also holds a poem that goes like this:

> The sound of the *takbir*.....
> reminds us of our past sins
> in prostrations we ask for Your Forgiveness
> let us ask [each other] for forgiveness on this holy day
> let us forget past wrongdoings
> Return us to the spirit of *fitri*
> let us strengthen our Faith and *Taqwa*
> by means of tightening the threads of *silaturahmi*[177]

[175] QS 1:1.
[176] I. *Semoga keselamatan dan Rahmat Allah selalu menyertai kita.*
[177] I. *Gema ta'bir.....*
mengingatkan kita akan dosa yang telah lalu

The third card—with its picture of a river, some white birds, and trees—is also poetic:

> All of a sudden.....
> time elapses so fast
> just as pouring water
> without any force.....
> so too do our lives
> go on, how beautiful
> and pleasant.....
> Yet in achieving
> dignity, [our] ideals, and success
> we cannot escape wrongdoings
> and temptations.
> On this holy day.....
> let us purify our spirits and hearts
> so that we will succeed
> in every matter.[178]

Whether or not people actually read such *Lebaran* poems or just notice who sent the card, I do not know.

The last thing we need to shortly notice here is that if *Lebaran* falls on a Friday, the otherwise for men obligatory *sholat jumat* becomes non-compulsory. Such was the case in 2002/1423, when all men in my vicinity chose not to attend the Friday prayer.

> *sujud kami bersimpuh mohon Ampunan kehadirat Mu*
> *di hari suci ini mari kita bermaaf-maafan*
> *melupakan kesalahan hari kemarin.*
> *Mengembalikan kita ke jiwa yang fitri*
> *mari kita pertebal Iman & Taqwa*
> *dengan memperketat jalinan benang silaturahmi.*

[178] I. *Tiada terasa.....*
waktu begitu cepat bergulir
tanpa paksaan.....
begitu pula lajur perjalanan
hidup kita, betapa indah
dan menyenangkan....
Namun dalam meraih
harkat, cita & kesuksesan
kita tak luput dari kesalahan
dan godaan.
Seiring hari yang suci ini....
bersihkan jiwa & hati kita
agar hari esok akan sukses
dalam segala hal.

As we have noted previously, there exists some prophetic traditions that recommend six additional days of fasting immediately after *Idul Fitri*. Muhammad is reported as having said that:

> He who observed the fast of Ramadan and then followed it with six (fasts) of Shawwal, it would be as if he fasted perpetually.[179]

It seems as the vast majority of Javanese Muslims do not practice this supererogatory fasting in *Sawal*, and that a substantial number of them not even are aware of the existence of this practice. It is generally felt that *Lebaran* cannot be concluded in just one day as activities of *silaturahmi* may continue for the entire first week of this post-Ramadan month. Forcing oneself to abstain from sweets and cookies during visits to friends and relatives is not an attractive alternative to many Javanese, and they are likewise not interested in presenting visitors these same sweets as they themselves are fasting. *Lebaran* is a multi-day feast, in which fasting is unthinkable. Consequently, some Javanese postpone these six days of additional fasting to the second half of the month.

Some of my friends—most of them students at various Islamic universities in Yogyakarta—were very strict in their observances of this *Sawal* fasting, however. Committing oneself to these six days of fasting, they argued in one voice, generates more *pahala* (I., divine reward, religious merit, A. *falāḥ*, *ajr*) than fasting the entire Ramadan. Although, some were quick to add, Ramadan is obligatory whereas fasting during the six days in *Sawal* is 'only' *sunat*. In the small town of Rembang on the northern coast of central Java—less than an hour's bus ride from Blora—the local Muslim community is also known to be rather fervent fasters during the second through the seventh of *Sawal*. Indeed, on the eighth of *Sawal* people in Rembang celebrate what they call *Lebaran Sawal*, which is a second feast of *Lebaran* after these six days of additional fasting. I have never witnessed this event myself, but from what people in Blora and also some residents of Rembang have told me, this second feast is even more joyous and vivacious than the first. This is in part explained by the annual presence of a well-attended night market (I. *pasar malam*).

In fact, this night market is an integral part of Ramadan in this area of Java, as it moves around to different towns prior, during, and after the month of fasting. I am not entirely sure of what route this market takes, but I know that it generally visits Kudus some time prior to Ramadan, that it is in Blora during the latter half of the fast, and that its presence in Rembang coincides

[179] ḤM 6,2614. The careful reader will recall that perpetual fasting is not recommended in other traditions (e.g., HM 6,2591, ḤB 3,31,185). In the present tradition, however, it is highlighted as something positive.

with the celebration of the *Lebaran Sawal*. Javanese children are very fond of this market, which thus constitutes one of the reasons for the bright childhood memories many central Javanese Muslims have of the month of Ramadan. In one modernist mosque in Blora where I used to join the *traweh* prayers, I personally found the alarming noise of this market—which was located not far away—to be rather disturbing, but I never heard any Javanese make this comment. This was perhaps due to the plausible fact that they all had their own cheerful memories from similar markets.

SYAWALAN AND *HALALBIHALAL*

As mentioned in the introduction to this work, Yogyakarta is often thought to be the 'most Javanese' of Javanese towns. It is here the Javanese language is preserved in its most *alus* (J., refined) form, and it is here expressions of Javanese culture are thought to be at their highest. If one wants to study Javanese language and culture, then Yogyakarta is the place to be, according to the common Indonesian—and foreign—standpoint.[180] This is only partially true, however. Being a university city, Yogyakarta is made up of a mix of different peoples, and is probably one of the few places in Indonesia where one is likely to find people from all of the country's thirty-something provinces. Consequently, the common language is here Indonesian rather than Javanese, and different cultural expressions and traditions make a colorful mix that makes up the 'actual' Yogyakartan culture. (See also the discussions on 'Javas away from the *keraton*' in the introduction above.)

Thus, in my *kampung* in the northern parts of Yogyakarta most of the inhabitants were not 'ethnic Yogyakartans' but rather located their home area in some other part of the country. The majority of the residents were Javanese, it is true, but the quarter also hosted people form West Java (Sundanese), Sumatra, Kalimantan, and Bali. During *Idul Fitri*, the neighborhood was consequently almost deserted as most people had gone *mudik* to their places of origin. (This included me, as I was in Blora.) When we then all returned to our *kampung* in Yogyakarta in early *Syawal*, the Ramadan committee there had arranged a post-Ramadanic get-together for all residents—including Christians, Buddhists, and everyone else—in the area. In Java, such social feast arranged some time during the first two weeks after Ramadan are known as either *syawalan* or *halalbihalal*. The main purpose of it is to let all residents exchange holiday greetings and ask each other for forgiveness, and the whole event can thus be said to be a large feast of *silaturahmi*. But there is more to these *syawalan* feasts. The one I attended in Yogyakarta in 2001, for example, offered both an extended Koran recitation by one of the locals, and several moralizing speeches by likewise local politicians. The ever-present food boxes containing a glass of water and some cookies were

[180] The neighboring Solo is also thought to be superior in its 'Javanese-ness.'

handed out as these speeches were delivered, and the event also presented those present with a real meal consisting of rice, a vegetable soup, and a kind of forcemeat balls (I. *bakso*). At the end of this social ritual, *everybody* shook each other's hands—physically or symbolically—and asked for each other's forgiveness.

Companies and state institutions whose employees have gone home to their parental areas during *Lebaran* generally also arrange similar feasts of *syawalan* or *halalbihalal* for their employees during the first few weeks of *Syawal*. As a concluding note, it might be interesting to know that some companies on such occasions offer Javanese traditional dance that dramatizes themes from *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata.*

CHAPTER SIX

COMPARED RAMADAN
INWARD AND OUTWARD PERSPECTIVES

In order to better understand the month of Ramadan as it is observed, lived, and commented upon in Java, we will now occupy ourselves with some enterprises of comparison. In the first section, I will discuss the relationship between the three entities of 'normative' (Arabic) texts, popular and contemporary Indonesian media, and the ethnographic 'reality' as these have been described in previous chapters. In relation to this I will also evaluate my ideas concerning the contemporary media expressions as 'cultural brokers,' and show that the success of this media as mediators between normative and lived Islam has been varying. All this will, I believe, render us able of comprehending the inner dynamics not only of Ramadanic fasting in Java but also of Javanese Islam in a broader sense.

In the second section, on the other hand, our perspective will be outward, as Ramadan in Java will be compared to 'other Ramadans' in other parts of the Muslim world. As substantial descriptions of these are surprisingly few in number, the comparisons will by necessity be limited to a handful of examples. This second section may also be seen as a survey and critique of the available and contemporary Ramadan literature written in English.

THE INNER ORGANIZATION OF JAVANESE RAMADAN

First of all, I should stress that Javanese Ramadan does not show up such an inner organization that I am about to describe here. That is, it does not present its casual observer with such well-defined and clear-cut lines of demar-

cation and analytical categories as will be discussed below. Both modern Javanese society and (Javanese) Islam are highly complex entities that on one level defy strict categorization. On another level, however, such categories may very well serve to highlight the inner dynamics and relationships of our main interest here—that is, Javanese Ramadan.

COMPARISONS

As throughout this work, with 'normative texts' I refer here to the Arabic Koran and collections of prophetic traditions, *aḥādīth*. 'Popular media,' on the other hand, refers to those contemporary Indonesian ritual handbooks, articles, songs, poems, sermons, and more, that were discussed in chapter four. With 'actual practice' I refer, finally, to what I have observed in Central Java myself. Note, again, that the terms 'normative,' 'popular,' and 'actual' are not thought of as by necessity being in positions of opposition or contradiction in this work.

Taqwā, takwa*, and little interest*

The ultimate goal of Ramadanic fasting according to the Koran is to "remain conscious of God."[1] This God-consciousness (A. *taqwā*, I. *takwa*) is—in its various grammatical forms—a recurring topic in the Koran,[2] and hence an important concept among certain Muslims. In his Koranic commentary, Asad notes that this is a problematic term that cannot simply be rendered as 'God-fearing' (as is common in English Koran and *aḥādīth* translations) since it encompasses "the awareness of His all-presence and the desire to mould one's existence in the light of this awareness."[3] It is thus a *positive* feeling, and this is also noted in the Indonesian Koranic translation published under the auspices of the Ministry of Religious Affairs.[4] Not surprisingly, the concept of *taqwā* is also recurrently commented upon in the *aḥādīth* collections. Here we can read, for example, that:

> Allah's Apostle was asked, "Who is the most honorable amongst the people?" He replied, "The most Allah fearing."[5]

In the contemporary Indonesian media, we also found repeated discussions of *takwa*, as the Arabic term is rendered in both Indonesian and Javanese. We saw above how the Indonesian scholar Khudori Soleh discussed

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[1] QS 2:183.
[2] Azharuddin Sahil (2001: 586ff.) lists almost two hundred entries under *takwa* in his *Indeks Al-Quran.*
[3] Asad 1980: 3, n. 2.
[4] *Al Qur'an dan Terjemahnya* 1971: 8, n. 12.
[5] ḤB 4,55,597.

takwa from a linguistic perspective, letting each Arabic letter represent an Arabic word or concept, and endowed people who *bertakwa* (I., have *takwa*) with all sorts of positive qualities. We also learned that *takwa* is "the most precious predicate by the side of Allah" and that it is "the mother of all virtue." We were moreover able of discerning the Indonesian idea that this God-consciousness not only affects humans' vertical relations with God (I. *hablum minallah*) but also their horizontal ones with their fellow humans (I. *hablum minannas*). As such, *takwa* is also a major source of morality, and what Indonesians refer to by the expression 'social piety' (I. *kesolehan social*). Further, in the words of the modernist Amien Rais, *takwa* prevents people from becoming "dangerous secularists and materialists" and ensures that Muslims remain patient and that they keep their promises. The famous Indonesian *da'i* (I., 'preacher') Zainuddin also talked (indirectly) about *takwa* in one of his sermons, in that he said that one should supply oneself well while still living in this world. According to the Koran, the best of supplies is that of *takwa*.[6] In the Ramadanic music too did we meet the concept of *takwa* when Raihan sung that *lailatul qadar* is a 'gift' to those who *bertakwa.*

We thus see that Indonesian comments on *takwa* are based in a Koranic and *ḥadīthic* context. We also see, however, that the normative arguments we find in these latter texts are further elaborated upon and developed by their contemporary Indonesian interpreters; "dangerous secularists and materialists" refer thus not to a Koranic context but to the contemporary Indonesian equivalent. In the popular Indonesian media, the concept of *takwa* is also linked to the contemporary situation in Indonesia, as distinct from that of seventh century Arabia. In other words, modern Indonesian commentators both develop the Koranic concept of *taqwā* and link it to contemporary Indonesian society and the conditions therein. We thus go from *taqwā* to *takwa*, which are not identical. *Takwa* has its roots in *taqwā*, but contains elements that cannot be found in—or even referred to—the latter. *Taqwā* has been made an Indonesian indigenous and contemporary concept in the form of *takwa.*

Among ordinary Javanese Muslims in Java, subtle notions of either *taqwā* or *takwa* are of little interest. Some Javanese—not few actually—may be able of reciting verse 183 of *sūratu l-baqarah* and thereby drawing attention to the relevance of *taqwā/takwa* in relation to Ramadanic fasting. Few would, however, be able of—or interested in—elaborating on the subject further. When asked about the goal, aim, and use of fasting in Ramadan, Javanese Muslims may thus quote the abovementioned Koranic verse, but they are more likely to mention other, non-*takwa* reasons for the annual fast. Primary among these are the ideas that divine forgiveness lurks around the Ramadanic corner, and that good and pious deeds are rewarded according to a special Ramadanic scale during this month. Javanese Muslims consequently use Ramadan to obtain divine forgiveness and for accumulating as much

[6] QS 2:197.

pahala (I., A. *falāḥ*, *ajr*, merit, divine reward) as possible. Taking this to its limit, some Javanese even keep count of their *pahala* reserve, and may state that this-or-that action will probably render them so-and-so much *pahala*. Observing similar conditions in Morocco, Buitelaar has thus talked about a "rather transactionalist and pragmatic attitude toward the divine," and "the image of God as an accountant."[7] In more common language usage, we would say that good deeds are thought to attract divine rewards and blessings, and that some (Javanese) Muslims keep rigorous control over these deeds and hoped-for rewards.

Names and qualities: Ramaḍān, Bulan Memberantas Korupsi, Pasa

Ramadan may pride itself of being the only month to be mentioned in the Koran.[8] Apart from this, it also has numerous 'nicknames' which all tell about Muslims' ideas about this holy month. That Ramadan is both *shahru l-barakah* in the Arab Muslim world and *bulan penuh berkah* (A., I., the blessed month) in Indonesia does thus not come as a surprise. Neither should we be surprised that Indonesian authors frequently make use the term *bulan maghfirah* (I., the month of forgiveness). This nickname may be referred back to the popular tradition in which it is said that Ramadan is divided into three equally long sequences in which God's grace is bestowed upon the fasting community in three different forms (blessings, forgiveness, and the release from the fire).

Indonesian contemporary media does not stop with these names. Instead, a flora of other nicknames and designations are habitually employed in this context: *bulan silaturahmi* (I., the month of guarding over one's bonds of friendship), *bulan memberantas korupsi* (I., the month of eliminating corruption), *bulan keadilan* (I., the month of justice), *bulan reformasi* (I., the month of [political] reforms), and *bulan kesetaraan jender* (I., the month of gender equality), to mention just a few. We see that all these designations have relatively clear connections to Indonesia: the first a cultural connection, the second, third, and fourth a political ditto and the last a new but increasingly important one.

When it comes to Ramadan's extraordinary qualities, boons, and secrets, Indonesian media demonstrates quite some creativity too. Hence, apart from mentioning the normative extraordinarinesses and boons of Ramadan such as initial Koranic revelation, divine forgiveness, and the chaining of the devils, Indonesian authors also highlight a series of other boons. This is probably common throughout the Muslim world.

In the daily lives of Javanese Muslims, the month of fasting is commonly referred to simply as *Wulan Pasa* or *Bulan Puasa* (J., I., fasting

[7] Buitelaar 1993: 124.

[8] QS 2:185. It may also pride itself of being the only Arabic month which has been given a widely accepted Anglicized form.

month). Even more common is the straightforward designation *Ramadhan*. Apart from these names, one also frequently hear that Ramadan is a holy (I. *suci*) and blessed (I. *diberkati*) month. But that is about all; more elaborating designations are not made use of, and when it comes to the boons, secrets, and extraordinarinesses of this month, Javanese ordinary Muslims generally have little to say. Instead, focus is again on what is *done* in this month—not on what is *said about it*. *Mas* Luqman, a student friend in Yogyakarta, once pondered upon the validity of some Indonesian authors in that they discuss the secrets (I. *rahasia*) of Ramadan. His point was that if God intended to have secrets for humans ("which He surely did!"), then these secrets cannot possibly be revealed in contemporary local scholarship. Would God really fail to keep His secrets real secrets due to the detective work of these authors, Luqman wondered. "If we really are talking about secrets," he concluded, "then we should let them be secrets." Readers are encouraged to remember the words of Ash-Shiddieqy, quoted in chapter four above.[9]

Rukyat-hisab*: no problem, ideally no problem, problems*

The Koran has little to say about the dating of Ramadan. In the verses concerning the Ramadanic fast we are only told that the Muslim community should fast "in the month of Ramadan." In the *aḥādīth* literature we find more specific regulations in regard to the determination of the arrival of the new moon. It is widely held on the basis of these two sources that Muhammad used to rely on the physical sighting of the new moon in the first place, and that he 'completed' *Shaᶜbān* as consisting of thirty days if the sky was overcast. There is thus no real 'problem' discernable in the Koran and the traditions in regard to the correct dating of the new month.

In the Indonesian media, on the other hand, we learn that different opinions exist in the Muslim community as of how this date should be settled. Some—in the Indonesian case the Muslim modernists with Muhammadiyah at the front line—argue that the new moon should be scientifically calculated as we now have reliable methods for doing this. Others—Muslim traditionalists and the Indonesian government, for instance—still chose to rely on their own eyes when it comes to settling the first of the new month. Indonesian contemporary books, articles, and sermons that touch upon this subject are generally rather 'liberal,' and simply encourage their readers and listeners to have a wide horizon in this respect. Echoing a worn-out Indonesian slogan they repeatedly state that plurality in the Indonesian Muslim community is a blessing, and that differences of this kind should not create any problems.

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[9] Which in English translation reads: "Scientists cannot find the essence or the boons of Ramadanic fasting, since there simply is no sound text on the matter. [And] we cannot rely on our minds, for questions of this nature are not covered by the abilities of human reason." (Ash-Shiddieqy 2000: 12.)

These words of wisdom do unfortunately not reflect the Javanese reality. In Java, as elsewhere in Indonesia, the debate concerning the correct dating of the first of Ramadan (and *Syawal*) is very much alive. Wide horizons and ideas about plurality as a blessing are regularly absent. Most years this debate may be avoided as the different methods of determining the first of the new month reach the same conclusions. Other years, however, tensions and heated debates are to be expected. My experience is that these debates and the critique they express are most often held *within* specific groups of Muslims in Java. Modernists may thus criticize the allegedly backward way of arranging *rukyatul hilal* sessions throughout Indonesia during the last (or second last) day of *Syaban*. But they generally do this within their own group, so as to avoid direct confrontation with those advocating such a method. Likewise, traditionalists may very well be rather strong in their critique of the *hisab* method, but they are likely to be that in places free from modernist ears. Some persons I have talked to have echoed the contemporary ritual handbooks saying that such differences of opinion should not stress the Indonesian *umat*, and it is my impression that ideas like that are gaining ground in contemporary Indonesia. Especially young and educated people are likely to express such opinions.

Welcoming Ramadan: arak-arakan, ruwahan, nyekar

Javanese Muslims are quite eager to welcome or, as they say, receive (J. *nyambut*) the month of fasting. Kindergartens, large companies, and local governments all arrange special pre-Ramadanic festivities and processions (I. *arak-arakan*) during the last few days of *Syaban*, as does shopping malls and smaller stores. Apart from this, a large portion of the Javanese *umat* is also likely to hold a special ritual, the so-called *ruwahan*. Javanese Muslims spend substantial amounts of time, energy, and money on the preparations and performances of such rituals, and it would probably be unthinkable for many Javanese to let *Syaban* pass by without throwing a *ruwahan*.

In addition, Javanese Muslims—at least traditionalist inclined ones—are quite likely to visit the graves (J. *nyekar*) of their deceased parents, parents-in-law, or other relatives some time prior to the commencement of Ramadan. This they do with the conviction that they need to ask for their deceased family members' forgiveness before they begin the fast. This is also the general idea behind the *ruwahan* ritual, although one's relations with still living relatives and neighbors also are guarded over by means of this ritual.

Javanese Muslims are furthermore likely to demand a 'cleaner society' during Ramadan, and working and lobbying for this begin some time before the fast commences. Such a society in this context means a society free from perceived immoralities of various kinds—prostitution and gambling being the two most targeted. Demanding a 'clean society' is reasonable according to Javanese Muslims, as they do not want to be disturbed by alleged immoral elements during their ritual activities in this holy month. Ideally, there should

be no gambling or prostitution during any time of the year in Java, but especially not during Ramadan.

Now, what do the contemporary media have to say about these ways of welcoming the month of fasting? Not much. Actually, nothing at all, since neither the pre-Ramadanic *arak-arakan* nor the *ruwahan* or the practice of *nyekar* are even mentioned in this 'literature.' True, one do occasionally run into short articles in Indonesian newspapers that tell about certain 'local practices,' including throwing *slametan* and visiting graves, but there are never any substantial discussions of these phenomena. Instead they are often portrayed only as belonging to the (very local) sphere of culture (I. *kebudayaan*) or tradition (I. *adat*), and not to that (more honorable nationwide or even worldwide category) of religion (I. *agama*). It took me by some surprise that so many pre-Ramadanic activities held to be important by Javanese Muslims fail to cause any discussion at all in the Indonesian contemporary and popular media.

What we find in this media instead are repetitions of the sermon delivered by Muhammad to his followers as Ramadan was about to commence.[10] In this sermon (as we have it today) the prophet explained, amongst other things, that the month of Ramadan is home to a night better than a thousand nights, and that non-obligatory deeds will be rewarded as if they were obligatory, whereas obligatory deeds will be rewarded as if they were carried out seventy times. In addition, stress is laid on the importance of providing fellow Muslims with food for breaking the fast in this sermon; to do this is said to be equal (in divine rewards) to performing the fast itself. Indonesian authors thus conclude that organizations, institutes, and neighborhood mosques ought to arrange pre-Ramadanic meetings where the duties and regulations of the month of fasting are elaborated upon. The purpose of such meetings should be to repeat the sermon of the prophet and discuss its content. Ahmadi and Prasetya suggest that the attendants of such a meeting should be presented with "a kind of Ramadanic program in line with [their] abilities and situations."[11]

(Needless to say, the Koran and the *aḥādīth* have neither references to *ruwahan* nor *arak-arakan*.)

The supererogatory prayers: tarāwīḥ, tarawih, traweh

Although not mentioned in the Koran and although they did not have a 'name' of their own during the time of the prophet, the supererogatory *tarawih* prayers attract intense attention in the Indonesian contemporary media. Muhammad used to perform such prayers under the umbrella term *qiyāmu l-layl*, (A., nightly prayers) according to the traditions. Initially he performed

[10] Cf. Ash-Shiddieqy 2000: 30ff, Ahmadi & Prasetya 2000: 1ff.

[11] Ahmadi & Prasetya 2000: 3. *...semacam program Ramadan yang sesuai dengan kemampuan dan keadaan pendengar.*

them in the mosque but soon chose to perform them in solitude at home as he became afraid that his followers would come to regard them as obligatory. After his death, the caliph ᶜUmar decided that they should be performed congregationally in the mosque and that the numbers of prayer cycles (A. *rakaᶜāt*) to be performed should be twenty-three (twenty *raka'at* of *tarawih* and three of *witir*). This stands in contrast to the *ḥadīth* that has it that Muhammad never performed more than eighth *rakaᶜāt* during any night, neither in Ramadan nor in any other month.

Anticipating this condition, the modern Indonesian media discuss the problem of the number of *raka'at* during the *tarawih* prayers at some length. Again, it is a liberal view we meet in the literature. We are thus introduced to the two different approaches mentioned above, and the conclusion that members of the Islamic community may choose either eighth or twenty *raka'at* according to their own convictions. Both numbers have legal backing, it is argued, and it is nevertheless not the numbers that are of the greatest importance here; focus should instead be on the hoped-for rewards. Instead of arguing over the exact number of *raka'at*, Muslims should then spend their energy on performing these prayers in full devotion (I. *khusyuk*), with the right intention (I. *niat*), and in full sincerity (I. *ikhlas*).

In a rather lengthy discussion in chapter five, we learned that the practice of performing these nightly supererogatory prayers (J. *sholat traweh*) is held in high esteem by Javanese Muslims. Mosques and prayer houses are at their fullest during the nights of Ramadan, and many Javanese even seem to equal Ramadan with these *traweh* prayers.

The performance of the *sholat traweh* in Java is, however, slightly disturbed by the difference of opinion concerning the number of *raka'at* these prayers should consist of. Some perform only eight *raka'at* whereas others perform twenty. Both camps refer their practices to the authentic sources of Islam (the Koran, the traditions, the consensus of the scholars, and the act of reasoning by analogy) in doing this. One group does this in the light of 'modernity' whereas the other does it in the name of 'tradition.' The result is at its best discussions, and at its worst ugly disputes. As with the dating of the first of Ramadan, critique towards other opinions are generally held within the own group, but regular disputes also occur. Such a *traweh* dispute in Blora was discussed in chapter five.

Again, it is my impression that young and/or educated Javanese are overrepresented in the group of Muslims who advocate a more liberal view on the matter of *raka'at* in the *traweh* prayers. As the discussion of the Bloran *traweh* dispute showed above, however, there is no guarantee that even the combination of young and educated gives birth to 'liberal' views.

The first revelation: nuzulul Qur'an, lailatul qadar, maleman *and* iktikaf

Throughout this work we have met the idea that the Koran was first revealed to Muhammad some time during Ramadan. In support of this, verse 185 of

sūratu l-baqarah says that Muslims should fast in "the month of Ramadan in which the Koran was [first] bestowed from on high."[12] Elsewhere in the Koran, the night in which this happened is referred to as *laylatu l-qadr*, the Night of Destiny.[13] The exact date of this night and the controversies around is discussed in the *aḥādīth* literature, and here it is also said that divine forgiveness lurks around the corner of it.

Comparing this 'normative' information with what is said in the Indonesian media on the subject we see that no major development has taken place. Indeed, the ritual handbooks, articles, songs, and poems seem just to repeat—albeit in translated form—the words of the Koran and the traditions. We are thus informed about the Koranic truism that this night is "better than a thousand months" and that God's angels descend to earth in it.[14] As a result, members of the Muslim community are repeatedly reminded that they ought to engage in ritual activities during this night. Broadly speaking, the normative material stops at this, and so does the Indonesian contemporary material.

As we learned in chapter five, Indonesians commemorate two events in this respect: *lailatul qadar* and *nuzulul Qur'an*. The lines between them and their meanings are rather diffuse. In fact, a majority of the Javanese Muslims seem to be unable of differentiating them from each other. The general view—if there ever was one—is that the Koran was revealed to Muhammad during *nuzulul Qur'an* and that destinies are fixed and divine rewards harvested in heaps during *lailatul qadar* (if one 'gets' it, that is). In Indonesia, the former is celebrated—or rather, commemorated—on the seventeenth of Ramadan, whereas the latter receives attention ten days later, on the twenty-seventh. Occasionally, *nuzulul Qur'an* is also linked to the Indonesian day of independence, which was proclaimed (during Ramadan) on August 17, 1945. Apart from some short articles written by Nurcholish Madjid, this is not discussed in contemporary works in Indonesia. A similar fate has been bestowed upon the special ritual meals thrown in some quarters during both *nuzulul Qur'an* and *lailatul qadar*, so-called *maleman*.

Connected to the idea of *laylatu l-qadr* is that of *iʿtikāf* (A., I. *iktikaf*), or mosque seclusion. This practice is hinted at in QS 2:187, and further developed in the *aḥādīth* literature. Our Indonesian handbooks, articles, songs, and poems have rather little to say about this practice. Where it is mentioned at all it seems to be more of loyalty to the normative material, than to the expectation that readers will engage in it. Indeed, among fasting Javanese Muslims only a very small portion devote the last third of Ramadan to *iktikaf.*

[12] QS 2:185.
[13] QS 97.
[14] Again, see QS 97.

Koran recitation

To Javanese Muslims, the recitation of the Koran is inevitable during Ramadan. Many Javanese awake to the sound of Koran recitation broadcast from the local mosque, and just as many fall asleep after the *traweh* prayers to the same sound. In between these two occasions, large parts of the Javanese *umat* also recite for themselves, listen to others reciting, or perhaps follow a course in Koran recitation. The number of Javanese Muslims who manage to recite the entire Koran during Ramadan is never exceeded in any other month.

As I have argued above, this 'sudden' interest in Koran recitation is largely based on the idea that good deeds will be rewarded generously during Ramadan. To this we should add, however, the fact that Muhammad used to recite the Koran together with the archangel *Jibrīl* during Ramadan, and we thus see that there is a strong link between normative texts and actual behavior in this respect. The Indonesian contemporary media, on the other hand, remain relatively quiet on the matter. The excellence of Koran recitation is mentioned from time to time, but no big deal is made out of it. It is thus obvious that ordinary Javanese Muslims lay much more stress on Koranic recitation during Ramadan than do various forms of contemporary media.

Social piety and the implementation of Ramadanic values

To care about one's fellow Muslims is often thought of as a religious duty. The Koran indeed repeatedly praises people who spend a part of their wealth in the interest of the community:

> Behold, God rewards those who give in charity.[15]
>
> ...and all men who give alms and women who give give in charity... for [all of] them has God readied forgiveness of sins and a mighty reward.[16]

Remember also that *zakāh* (A., I. *zakat*, charity) is one of the so-called five pillars of Islam.

When it comes to the specific Ramadanic context, we have learnt from a prophetic tradition that Muhammad used to become "more generous than a fast wind" during this month. And in his pre-Ramadan sermon, the importance of charity is repeatedly stressed.

As for the contemporary Indonesian media, we saw that it was foremost the Ramadanic articles that addressed this topic. In these articles we found some criticism of the way most Indonesian Muslims approach Ramadan, and the fast therein. It was said that attention is almost entirely paid to the spiritual or private part of Ramadanic fasting, and that the social dimension is widely neglected. Ramadan is thus understood as a *cultus privatus* only, and

[15] QS 12:88.
[16] QS 33:35.

not as a *cultus publicus*. Hoped-for feelings of *iba* (I., affection) and *kasihan* (I., pity), and the social solidarity those should invoke, are consequently sought after in vain in the Indonesian context. Ramadan, in its capacity of a 'momentum' for social change and renewed social awareness, is thus not fully appreciated, and this is as true for 'ordinary' Muslims as it is for politicians.

I do not fully agree with this criticism. Many Javanese Muslims state that one of the primary goals of Ramadanic fasting is to gain an understanding of the everyday life situation of the pauper elements (I. *fakir-miskin*) of society. And this, they say, is bound to provoke feelings of pity, affection, and social solidarity, and lead to practical action. These practical actions generally consist of the distribution of some cash money, but it is not entirely uncommon that people cook or buy loads of food and have that distributed to the poor during Ramadan, or, as we saw above, allocate gifts or alms of various kinds to them. These alms may be caused by a fear that God will not accept (I. *menerima*) thirty days of fasting if they are not accompanied by some social piety, but they may also be generated by notions of prestige (I. *gengsi*) and the wish to show off (I. *pamer*). Anyhow, I feel that there is a heightened social awareness during Ramadan in Java, and that the critique presented in the discussed articles thus only partially reflects the truth. It might be that some Javanese Muslims—both high officials and politicians as well as 'ordinary' people, but probably more so the two former—are 'insufficiently' moved and inspired by the 'Ramadanic momentum.' It is not so, however, that Javanese Muslims generally only care about the spiritual and private dimension of the month long fast.

Other mosque activities: kultum, pengajian, classes of ngaji and tafsir

In Java, many mosques and even prayer houses arrange short Islamic lectures (I. *kultum*) both at dawn and at night; the former are held in connection with *sholat subuh* and the latter in connection with *sholat traweh*. In addition, some mosques also hold other nightly get-togethers consisting of a sermon, a few cookies, and some gossip—so called *pengajian*. These are generally widely attended. As if this was not enough, many mosques also arrange special Koranic classes: either classes of recitation (I. *ngaji*), or of exegesis (I. *tafsir*).

Interestingly, neither normative nor popular texts have anything to say about this role of mosques during Ramadan. What is occasionally hinted at is that Muslims are obliged to search for knowledge during any time of the year, and that religious activity should increase in both quantity and quality during the holy month of fasting.

Mudik

There can be no *Lebaran*, or perhaps even Ramadan, in Java if there is not the practice of *mudik* (I., going home to one's native area). Despite the many hardships that await Javanese Muslims who will undertake such a journey, an amazingly large number of them are so eager to depart, that *iktikaf* and other 'late' Ramadanic activities have to be neglected. Focus is on two things: get a ticket, and get on the vehicle. Everything else—outrageous prices, traffic jams, intense discomfort, etc—is not weighed in the decision to go *mudik*. To *mudik* in connection with *Lebaran* is perhaps the only chance during the year to meet up with family and friends, and this is indeed the main reason for going. Those eager to have a religious (Islamic) motivation for the practice of *mudik* refer to the *silaturahmi*—both with living and deceased relatives—such a journey enables.

Similarly to the fate of 'other mosque activities' discussed above, the practice of *mudik* is not mentioned in the popular and contemporary Indonesian media that discusses Ramadanic fasting. When it comes to the feast of *Lebaran* focus is instead on the special *id* prayers, to which we now turn.

Idul Fitri – nothing more than the id prayer?

ʿĪdu l-fiṭr (A., I. *Idul Fitri*), or the feast that concludes the month of Ramadan, is not mentioned in the Koran. In the traditions, focus is generally only on the performance of the special *ʿīd* prayer and the *khuṭbah* (A., sermon) presented in connection with it. We thus understand that there is little more to this holiday than performing the congregational prayer and listening to the sermon at the morning of the first of *Shawwal*. Added to this are a few optional ritual details: one should ideally have taken a bath the same morning, one should dress in one's best clothes, and one should not take the same way back from the ritual location as the one used to get there. As far as the ritual handbooks are concerned, nothing more is added to this (Koranic and *ḥadīthic*) view of the feast.

In the Indonesian Ramadanic articles, songs, poems and even soap operas, however, the feast of *Idul Fitri* is more thoroughly elaborated upon. Here we find discussions about this day as the day of victory (I. *hari kemenangan*), and the day during which Muslims return or are returned to their natural dispositions (I. *fitrah*). We also find an emphasis on the *Indonesian* post-Ramadanic habit of *silaturahmi* and *halalbihalal*, and especially the importance that should be attached to them. Stressed in this material is naturally also the need for asking for forgiveness on the day of *Idul Fitri*. Some authors choose to stress the Islamic character of practices such as *halalbihalal* and *silaturahmi*, whereas others choose to stress their Javanese character.

For Javanese Muslims, there is much more to *Lebaran* than the *id* prayer; in fact, the *id* prayer is just the beginning of the feast. The Javanese celebration of the end of the fast has been rather thoroughly discussed above,

and we need not reiterate that discussion here. Suffice it to mention some aspects of it that receives attention neither in the normative nor the popular texts: *sungkeman*, refined handshakes, *salam tempel*, *nyekar*, karaoke feasts, *kartu Lebaran*, and post-Ramadanic *syawalan* feasts.

Summary: a multitude of relationships

From this short exercise in comparisons, we may now safely conclude that there exists no 'standard' relationship between the entities we have called normative, written, and lived Ramadan. In some instances we have seen that the Indonesian contemporary media has developed and elaborated normative ideas, and firmly established them in the contemporary Indonesian society. At the same time, 'ordinary' Javanese Muslims have cared little about such ideas in the first place, and instead focused on the practical sides of Ramadan [1, 2].[17]

We have also seen how, among Javanese Muslims, a problem has been created from normative sources, where such a problem is seemingly absent. In this case, the popular Indonesian texts have tried to reduce this problem to a minor issue, by way of focusing on other aspects of the specific ritual [3]. In another similar but different case, we have learned that partially confusing normative texts have had their confusion reduced in popular Indonesian texts, in order to reduce tensions in Javanese society [5].

In yet some other instances, we have realized that the Indonesian media only repeats what is said in the normative texts, without paying much attention to the actual—and occasionally confused—situation in Java [6, 11]. Furthermore, we have also seen that some Javanese practices fail to be mentioned in both the normative texts and their contemporary and popular equivalents [4, 9, 10]. In yet another discussion did we see that there is a stronger link between actual practice and normative texts than there is to contemporary media [7]. Similarly, we also observed another strong link between actual and normative sides of Ramadan in another instance, although the contemporary media argued that this bond was non-existent. [8].

In short, the relation between normative, written, and lived Ramadan cannot be described with the same terms in all instances.

[17] Numbers within brackets refer to the various headings in this subsection. [1] thus refers to the discussion on *takwa*, [2] to that of Ramadanic names and boons, [3] to that of the *rukyat-hisab* controversy, [4] to that of Javanese ways of welcoming the month, [5] to that of *traweh* prayers, [6] to that of the first Koranic revelation, [7] to that of Koran recitation, [8] to that of social piety, [9] to that of mosque activities, [10] to that of *mudik*, and, finally, [11] to that of *Idul Fitri.*

POPULAR MEDIA: SUCCESSFUL BROKERS?

I presented the idea in the introduction to this work that popular media may perhaps be seen as 'cultural brokers.' I argued that we may preferably regard the contemporary Indonesian media expressions as mediators between what has been referred to as 'normative' and 'practical' Islam respectively. It was my idea that these media kind of had one leg in each tradition, and that they were able of making the two communicate. It is now time to see just how successful brokers the contemporary and popular Indonesian Ramadan media expressions have been; that is, to what extent they have succeeded in mediating between these two traditions. Again, nothing general can be said.

Successful broking

In only two cases discussed in this work can we talk about popular media's successful broking in Ramadanic questions. These two cases are those of the *rukyat-hisab* controversy and the *traweh* dispute. 'Successful,' the reader understands, refers not primarily to actual success in convincing or educating Javanese Muslims; should that be the case, we should not meet these controversies and disputes in contemporary Java. Much more modest then, the term rather refers to a success in appreciating a problem and discussing it from various angles.

Concerning the *rukyat-hisab* controversy, we saw that the ritual handbooks had a relatively tolerant view of various practices, even though all of them favored the *rukyatul hilal* method. This tolerance was most clearly seen in the work of the modernist Ash-Shiddieqy who—uncharacteristically for a Muslim modernist in Indonesia—argued for *rukyatul hilal* and that the two methods of *rukyah* and *hisab* should complement each other in this enterprise. Similar attitudes were presented by some Indonesian astronomers during Ramadan 2002. Likewise, Indonesian newspapers and various talk shows in radio and TV unconditionally present such a tolerant view of the *rukyat-hisab* controversy, which should not be a controversy at all according to writers and speakers in these media. Should various groups of Muslims in Indonesia settle for different dates for either commencing or concluding the annual fast, then local *ulama*, scholars, and politicians are quick to note in various contexts that such a result should not disturb the Indonesian *umat*. Instead, Indonesian Muslims should take the opportunity of enjoying the plurality their country possesses.

It is noteworthy that I have never read or heard any comment in popular Indonesian media that straightforwardly condemns either of the two methods of *rukyatul hilal* or *hisab*. It is in this respect we can call that media 'successful brokers,' since they nevertheless discuss the issue at some length.

When it comes to the *sholat traweh*—or, rather, the number of *raka'at* these prayers should consist of—we found an even more tolerant, liberal, and inclusive attitude in the ritual handbooks. After discussing various ideas of

how many units the *traweh* prayers should comprise, and presenting lengthy and very manual-like sections on how these should be carried out, all of our handbooks agreed that the question concerning the number of *raka'at* should not pose any problems to the Indonesian or Javanese Muslim community. Instead of concentrating on this matter, focus should be on the aim of the prayers themselves, and the performer's intent and hoped-for sincerity. As for the number of *raka'at*, the Indonesian author Romdoni Muslim concluded that each Muslim may decide for either eight or twenty, according to her own convictions and abilities. 'Islam' does not settle for a specific number, and various constituents of the Islamic community cannot, as a consequence, act arrogantly and blame others for doing 'wrong.' Again, comments in the Indonesian popular media on Ramadan that condemns either of the two *raka'at* convictions are, to the best of my knowledge, non-existent. Hence the 'success' of the contemporary media in this respect too.

Less successful broking

In many more instances than those just discussed, we see that the broking or mediating qualities of the Indonesian contemporary and popular Ramadan media are rather meager. This is somewhat unfortunate, since many practices held dear by the Javanese *umat* consequently are not mentioned—let alone discussed—in this media. It might be that authors have no wish to regard these practices as belonging to the Islamic (normative) tradition, and thus choose not to mention them. If this is the case—I am not sure it is—one would rather see some cultural critique in these works, but that too is virtually non-existent.

First and foremost, it is the Javanese ways of *nyambut* (J., receiving) the month of fasting that are left unmentioned in the popular media. Practices that are nearly inseparable from Ramadan according to the Javanese way of appreciating this month are thus simply ignored by this media. As we learned in chapter five above, many Javanese Muslims go out of their ways in their 'welcoming' of the month of fasting, and practices such as *arak-arakan*, *ruwahan*, and *nyekar* are intrinsic to the ritual complex that constitutes Ramadan. It is perhaps true that Muslim traditionalists in Java are more inclined than modernists to perform these pre-Ramadanic rituals, and that we therefore might expect that authors feel uncomfortable in discussing them. But then again, this popular media demonstrates a rather traditionalist view in several other instances. The question why these practices are left unmentioned must then be left behind—unfortunate for us, and, I believe, for Javanese Muslims. It is obvious that the popular Indonesian media cannot be referred to as 'cultural brokers' in this respect.

The same can be said about the media discussions on *nuzulul Qur'an*, *lailatul qadar*, and *maleman.* What we find in the media are mere repetitions of the normative material; discussions of Javanese actual practice are sought after in vain. There are thus practically no words on the confusion concerning

the two commemorations of *lailatul qadar* and *nuzulul Qur'an* in contemporary Java,[18] and neither is there any discussion on the specific *slametan* during these commemorations.

Concerning the feast of *Lebaran* or *Idul Fitri*, a similar condition can also be discerned. In the ritual handbooks, *Idul Fitri* is simply reduced to the special *id* prayers and some additional normative ritual details. The Ramadanic articles present a slightly more nuanced discussion of the feast, but they are nevertheless still far from the Javanese 'reality' with its queer mix of *sungkeman* and Elvis on the karaoke set.

All these cases then falsify the idea I had that contemporary and popular Indonesian media discussing Ramadanic issues can be regarded as 'cultural brokers.' It is obvious how these media fail to mediate between normative and practical Islam.

Little interest and/or no broking needed

In yet some other instances, there is only little need for, or interest in, broking activities. Such is the case for example in regard to the *taqwā/takwa* discussion, and the discussions about the additional names and extraordinary qualities of Ramadan. There is no need for mediating here, since Javanese Muslims generally only show a minor interest in such discussions. There is further, so to say, no 'problem' or discrepancy between normative and actual Islam in this respect—due to the Javanese disinterest—, and any mediating attempts by the contemporary media would necessarily be superfluous. Two other instances where no broking is needed are those of *mudik* and what has been referred to above as 'other mosque activities.'

JAVANESE RAMADAN LOOKING OUTWARD

In order to widen the horizon of the Javanese Ramadan that stands in focus in this work, we will now turn our attention outward to see how Ramadan has been described in relatively recent times elsewhere. As already mentioned, such reports on Ramadan written in English are very few. Focus in this section will be on comparing Ramadan in Java with 'Ramadans' elsewhere, but an enterprise like this necessarily also becomes a survey and critique of the available (English) Ramadan literature. The decision to present this survey so late in this work has been motivated by my will not to 'burden' the reader with ideas and imaginations of 'other Ramadans' before the Javanese case was thoroughly discussed. By doing this, I hope the reader's preconceived

[18] The one odd exception in this respect is Nurcholish Madjid, but even his treatment of the issue is rather elusive.

notions of what Ramadan 'should' or 'should not' consist of have been held to a minimum.

MOROCCO

Women's participation: Buitelaar

To the best of my knowledge, the one and only monograph (written in English) being solely dedicated to the ethnographic study of Ramadan, is that of Marjo Buitelaar. Her work, *Fasting and Feasting in Morocco: Women's Participation in Ramadan*, was published in 1993.[19] This is a valuable, interesting, and entertaining work, as it throws light on how Ramadan is lived in a Moroccan context. Buitelaar focuses primarily on the lives of Moroccan women in her study, however, and thus conveys only a partial understanding of Ramadan due to the relatively strict segregation of the sexes in Moroccan society. Her work is moreover hampered by a common feminist way of reasoning, which seems to have as its goal to defend female practices, and discard male dittos. She can thus say that women are "disadvantaged" when it comes to voluntarily fasting, since they are to ask their husbands for their consents before they begin fasting. Without that consent, there may be no voluntarily fast. Men are thus the ones in control of religious merit, *ajr*; they may fast whenever they want to.[20] What Buitelaar oversees is the common idea among Muslims, that a woman who obeys her husband's wish—in this case abstaining from fasting—will also receive divine merit for that very reason. In this view then, her husband supplies her with *ajr* without her having to perform the voluntary fast in the first place. In Java, I have never heard a woman complain over the fact that she would have to ask for her husband's consent if she wanted to perform voluntarily fasting. Instead, I have been presented with the idea that married couples should discuss all matters—including religious ones—with each other before acting alone. More than one woman have added that there are more than three hundred potential days for voluntarily fasting during a year, and that a women and her husband should be able of finding suitable days among them to perform such a fast.

Elsewhere, Buitelaar, in a similar shallow line of reasoning, suggests that women "have not completed the process of purification [during Ramadan] as effectively as men have," since the women wear colorful dresses instead of the white, pure *jellāba* during *ʿīdu l-fiṭr*.[21] Turning the argument the other way around, one could perhaps suggest that men have not had so much fun as the women during Ramadan, since they do not adorn themselves with colorful dresses. For men, a simple white color is enough for the occa-

[19] Buitelaar 1993. This is a slightly revised version of her Ph.D. thesis "Fasting and Feasting in Morocco: An Ethnographic Study of the Month of Ramadan" (1991).
[20] Buitelaar 1993: 35f.
[21] Buitelaar 1993: 112.

sion. Buitelaar also states that women are excluded from the *ʿīd* prayer since "they should not be seen by men while praying."[22] This too is a partial truth only: men should not be seen by women while praying either; segregation always involves at least two parties.

Anyhow, *Fasting and Feasting* contains sufficient ethnographic data for us to understand the general features of Ramadan in Moroccan (female) society. After discussing the "prescriptions on fasting in Islamic law" in the first chapter of the work, the author proceeds to discuss the activities of Moroccan Muslims during the month of *Shaʿbān*.[23] Here we may read about certain practices and ideas that make Ramadan in Morocco a specific *Moroccan* ritual: the special *ḥrǐra* (MA.)[24] soup, the *šebbakǐya* (MA.) cookies, Ramadan banners, etc. We learn that women during this month spend some time and energy on cleaning their houses and buying new kitchen utensils: purity is central to the Moroccan idea of Ramadan according to Buitelaar (see also below), and there is supposed to be *barakah*, blessings, in new kitchen ware. This month also sees the celebration of a substantial numbers of wedding parties. An engaged man who (due to different reasons) cannot yet get married to his fiancé will have to send special *Shaʿbān* presents to his bride-to-be, and attend a party held in honor of the engaged couple in the house of his future parents-in-law. Moroccan Muslims, we are told, also arrange special "Shaban parties" during this month, so called *šeʿbăna* (MA.), in order to—in the words of one of Buitelaar's informants—"rejoice and celebrate the coming of Ramadan."[25] Unfortunately, neither the engaged-couple-party nor the *šeʿbăna* are discussed at any length by Buitelaar.

Moroccan Muslims often also fast for a couple of days during *Shaʿbān*: some make up for missed days during last year's Ramadan, whereas others follow the way of the prophet who is said to have fasted more during *Shaʿbān* than during any other month (except Ramadan). It is noteworthy that Moroccan women prefer to make up for missed days due to menstruation as soon as possible after Ramadan, and thus depart from the example set by one of the prophet's wives. The most popular day for voluntary fasting during this month falls on the fifteenth (MA. *nuṣṣ*), during which God is thought to decide "who will live and who will die in the year to come."[26]

Apart from cleaning their houses and kitchen utensils, Moroccan women also have various methods of purifying their bodies during this pre-Ramadanic month: Buitelaar mentions visits to the public bath (MA. *ḥammăm*), the suspension of drinking alcohol forty days before the fast (!),

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[22] Buitelaar 1993: 74, n. 24.

[23] It is surprising that Buitelaar in her first chapter (and, indeed, throughout the work) fails to discuss the concept of *taqwā*, which is the ultimate Koranic goal of fasting during Ramadan as laid out in QS 2:183.

[24] 'MA' in this section refers to Moroccan Arabic as transliterated by Buitelaar.

[25] Buitelaar 1993: 32.

[26] Buitelaar 1993: 35.

and bloodletting.[27] In addition to this, Moroccan women (associated with the religious order of *Gnawa*) also purifies their psyche during *Shaᶜbān* by way of nights of trance-dancing. This practice is described by Buitelaar at some length; in fact, it receives a longer discussion than any other Ramadan connected ritual in her work.[28] I am not sure if the length of this discussion corresponds to the importance attached by Moroccan Muslims to these *lĭla* (MA.) or *derdeba* (MA.), nights of trance-dancing. Without going in to details here, we should note that the general idea behind these nightly rituals seems to be to bid a temporary farewell to the spirits who will be locked up in shackles during Ramadan.[29] The whole ritual thus has a *ḥadīthic* motivation.

Let us pause for a moment here and compare Moroccan *Shaᶜbān* activities with their Javanese counterparts. As Muslims in Morocco, the Javanese are eager to finish off whatever they have going in *Ruwah* (J., A. *Shaᶜbān*). Differing from the Moroccan case, however, this does not generally include the arrangement of wedding parties, which are more likely to be held in the months of *Besar* (J., A. *Dhū l-ḥijjah*) or *Mulud* (J., A. *Rabīᶜu l-awwal*). There is further no idea in Java that one's house should be thoroughly cleaned during *Ruwah*, or that one's kitchens utensils should either be washed and polished or, ideally, replaced with new—*barakah* loaded—ones.[30] Java share, however, the presence of various special Ramadan foodstuff and Ramadan banners during *Ruwah* with the Moroccan case, and the Moroccan *šeᶜbăna* could perhaps be likened to the Javanese *ruwahan* ritual. The scarce information of the *seᶜbăna* in *Fasting and Feasting* unfortunately deplores further comparison.

Both Moroccan and Javanese Muslims seem to spend more time fasting during *Shaᶜbān* than during any other month, and this is in line with the practice of the prophet. It seems, however, that the importance of fasting during the fifteenth (MA. *nuṣṣ*, I. *nisfu Syaban*) is more stressed in Morocco than in Java. In Java there is no pre-Ramadanic ritual which has as its aim to bid farewell to the spirits that will be locked up during the fast, and neither is there any ideas comparable to those of the purity of the body and the psyche in Morocco. There is no culture of going to public baths in Indonesia, and bloodletting as a means of 'removing bad blood' during *Shaᶜbān* is unheard of.

In Java, we have seen that the problem of the dating of the first of Ramadan is widely discussed: modernists argue for the calculation of the new moon, whereas the traditionalists argue for the physical sighting of it. Buitelaar has apparently not observed any such discussions in Morocco, since she—in her section on the "prescriptions on fasting in Islamic law"—simply

[27] Buitelaar 1993: 39.
[28] Buitelaar 1993: 40-51.
[29] Buitelaar 1993: 42.
[30] The idea that the whole society should be 'cleaned up' from immoral elements is shared by both Javanese and Moroccan Muslims (Buitelaar 1993: 111).

suggests that "the first and last day of Ramadan should not be determined by calculation, but by witnessing the new moon."[31] As I understand it, her words 'should not be' in this quote could also be replaced by 'is not.' Looking from the Javanese perspective, I must admit that it seems odd that all Moroccan Muslims should accept this.

For Javanese Muslims, there is also the practice of *nyekar* (J.), or going to one's deceased relatives' graves, during *Ruwah*. Just as the *ruwahan* ritual, this practice is occasionally referred to by the expression *ngirim donga* (J., send prayers), which then reveals its ultimate goal. As we know, Javanese Muslims also go *nyekar* after the conclusion of the fast, in connection with the feast of *Lebaran*. In Morocco, Buitelaar reports that it is the day after the 27th of Ramadan (the day after *laylatu l-qadr*, that is) that is the "the day of the visit to the deceased" (MA. *nhăr z-ziyăra*). Differing from the Javanese case, Moroccan Muslims do not refer to this practice as 'sending prayers' but rather as 'giving alms' (MA. *nṣedqu*), and these alms are directed to the still living.[32]

Turing to the actual month of fasting, we see that Buitelaar's account of it is focused on a few major themes: the "preferred days" (15th and 27th) of this month, Ramadanic food and daily habits, and the feast of *ʿīdu l-fiṭr*.

On the eve before the first Ramadan, people go out of their houses to congratulate their neighbors and say *mebrŭk ʿlĭk ṛemḍăn* (MA., 'blessings be upon you this Ramadan'), the answer to which is *llăh ibărak fĭk* (MA., 'God bless you'). There is a festive atmosphere and children gather "to march from alley to alley, beating their drums and singing special Ramadan chants."[33] Talking about everyday life during the holy month of fasting, Buitelaar says that people in Morocco like to sleep late; unemployed women may sleep as late as nine or ten o'clock, and "many take a nap at noon" (!).[34] Concerning the food eaten during this month, Buitelaar says that both the quality and the quantity of it increase, and she speaks of "lavish Ramadan meals" and "excessive consumption."[35] Special attention is given to the aforementioned *ḥrĭra* soup, which is inevitable at the time for breaking the fast, and contributes to the specific Moroccan character of Ramadanic fasting. Families are inclined to break the fast together, and, indeed, the "family ethos is strongly emphasised during Ramadan."[36]

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[31] Buitelaar 1993: 29. In this same section Buitelaar also simply states that the "conditions that render the fast valid are that one should pronounce the intention to fast and be in a pure state." She thus ignores several other prerequisites of the person fasting according to the Mālikīte school of law (which Moroccan Muslims adhere to): to be a Muslim, to be sane, to be capable of performing the fast, and to be in the month of Ramadan. Cf. chapter three above, and the section on 'Legal Differences.'

[32] Buitelaar 1993: 70.

[33] Buitelaar 1993: 53.

[34] Buitelaar 1993: 55f.

[35] Buitelaar 1993: 58. I have already commented on this in chapter five above.

[36] Buitelaar 1993: 59.

The first of the "preferred days" is that of *weṣṭ ṛemḍăn* (MA.), the middle of Ramadan. We learn nothing more from *Fasting and Feasting* than this celebration includes giving toys to children and having a soup of chicken or rabbit for supper. The second of the preferred days, that of *laylatu l-qadr*, is more thoroughly discussed. People in Morocco refer to this night as *s-seb*^{c}*a u* ^{c}*ešrĭn*, that is, 'the 27th.'[37] Moroccan children often fast for the first time during the day prior to this night, and mosques are full of people "praying and reciting the Koran." Women, being largely excluded from mosques, however, rather go to visits the tombs of various saints.[38] *Laylatu l-qadr* is further believed to be the night when the spirits—who have been locked up during Ramadan—returns to the face of the earth. Moroccan Muslims thus burn incense to welcome them back, according to some of Buitelaar's informants. According to other, however, the incense is meant for the angels that—according to the Koran—descend to the earth during this night.[39]

Before ^{c}*īdu l-fiṭr*, the entire house is again cleaned, and Moroccan Muslims pay the *zakăt al-fiṭr.* This special Ramadan tax is paid in either wheat or cash in Morocco, and people who have the legal right to collect such alms come to do that at the houses of those who will pay. Among those collecting *fiṭra*, one's midwife, the local oboe player, the dustman, and the watchman, are to be expected. One can also distribute extra *fiṭra* for various reasons.[40] During the feast of ^{c}*īd*, people send 'breakfasts' to their neighbors, and visit relatives. The special ^{c}*īd* prayer is "exclusively visited by men"; women stay at home and are busy applying henna on their feet and hands.[41]

The starkest contrast to the Javanese Ramadan as described in chapter five above, is the minimal attention paid to the supererogatory nightly prayers (A. *tarāwīḥ*) in Buitelaar's work. She mentions their existence briefly,[42] but fails to discuss them or even describe them. As I have hinted elsewhere in this work, this is probably due—partly, at least—to the fact that Buitelaar is a woman and thus has had limited access to mosques during her fieldwork. In Marrakech, Buitelaar says she knew of no one (woman) who performed these nightly prayers in the mosque, whereas in Berkane, even the mother in her host family "went with friends to pray the *tarāwīḥ* in the mosque."[43] There is thus undeniably a certain importance attached to these prayers by women in Morocco too. They are perhaps not as identified with Ramadan as they are in Java, but I doubt that Buitelaar's failed account of them reflects the general female attitude in Morocco. One also wonders why she did not go along her female host to the mosque.

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[37] Buitelaar 1993: 64.
[38] Buitelaar 1993: 65.
[39] Buitelaar 1993: 69.
[40] Buitelaar 1993: 72f.
[41] Buitelaar 1993: 74.
[42] Buitelaar 1933: 25, 60, 61.
[43] Buitelaar 1993: 61.

I was also surprised by the little attention that is paid Koranic recitation by Buitelaar and/or her informants. In one passage, Buitelaar says that "neither in Marrakech nor in Berkane did I meet people who actually read the Koran."[44] This too strongly contrasts with the condition in Java where Koranic recitation is inseparable from the month of Ramadan.

The "preferred days" too differs from conditions in Java. The middle of Ramadan is not celebrated in any way by Javanese Muslims, and when it comes to the phenomena of *lailatul qadar*, there is much more confusion than Buitelaar suggests there is in Morocco. In Java we have the double commemoration of *lailatul qadar* and *nuzulul Qur'an*, and concerning the date for at least the first of these are there different opinions. The 27th is a recurring date mentioned in Java, but various other views are to be expected too. I have never heard that children perform their first fast during the day prior to the night of *lailatul qadar* in Indonesia, and neither have I met the idea that the spirits should return to earth on this night. (Logically this would suggest that Ramadan ends with *lailatul qadar*, and this is not the case, according to Muslims in Java.)

In Java, the *sholat id* is for everybody: half of the congregation is female, and even menstruating women come along for the festive occasion, although they do not join the congregational prayer. With the balloons and everything, there is a carinvalesque atmosphere. The Indonesian practice of *silaturahmi* after the performance of the *id* prayer seems to resemble the Moroccan practice of 'sending breakfasts' and paying visits to family and friends. Notions of forgiveness and reconciliation are also present in Morocco during this day.[45] Judging from Buitelaar's account, the importance of it is more stressed in Java, however. According to many Javanese themselves, *silaturahmi* during *Idul Fitri* is a thoroughly Indonesian custom that has no equivalent in the Muslim world. As such it is often presented as a source of pride.

This is not the place to discuss Buitelaar's analytical discussion of Moroccan Ramadan, but a few words on it seem inescapable. Buitelaar argues that there are "three key notions" in the Moroccan view that make Ramadanic fasting "a meaningful act."[46] Elsewhere she speaks of "three notions through which *Moroccans construct* the practice of fasting."[47] These three notions are that of *umma*, *ṭahāra*, and *ajr* (MA.): i.e., the Muslim community, (ritual) purity, and spiritual rewards. The only of these that seems specifically Moroccan is that of *ṭahāra*; ritual purity is indeed of immense importance to Moroccan Muslims.[48] As such it is not solely linked to Ramadanic fasting, however. Ideas of the wider Muslim community and hopes for divine rewards

[44] Buitelaar 1993: 66.
[45] Buitelaar 1993: 76, 89.
[46] Buitelaar 1993: 77.
[47] Buitelaar 1993: 177. Italics added.
[48] See Østergaard's dissertation (2002) on ritual purity in Morocco.

probably play a role in virtually *all* Islamic rituals, regardless of their actors' geographic location.[49] The five pillars of Islam, for example, do all in one way or another call attention to the fact that Muslims all over the world share some common ideas.[50] Likewise, the notion of divine rewards as a reimbursement for the performance of religious rituals are to be expected—is not that one of the very basics of what we call 'religiosity'? In Java too, Ramadanic fasting involves notions of the wider Muslim community and that of divine rewards (I. *pahala*), whereas that of ritual purity generally not is emphasized. As for the notions of *umat* and *pahala*, Javanese Muslims do not, however, present such a coherent front as the Moroccan Muslims do in *Fasting and Feasting*. The idea of the unity of the Muslim community cannot be but disturbed when even small neighborhoods in the Javanese countryside are divided by different opinions on how Ramadan should be carried out. Members of the Javanese *umat* (may) begin and end the fast on various days, and differ in their performance of various Ramadanic rituals. Moreover, certain (Ramadanic) rituals are not approved of by all Javanese Muslims, and here the idea of hoped for *pahala* becomes important: whereas some Muslims regard a certain practice as forbidden *syirk* (I., innovation), others regard it as highly *pahala* generating. When I read Buitelaar's analytical discussion, I thus got the feeling that her 'key notions' and ideas of the 'construction' of Ramadanic fasting not are as important and meaningful to Moroccan Muslims as they are to herself.

Finally, Buitelaar also discusses Ramadan as a "liminal month."[51] Without discussing it at any length here, I agree that Ramadan may be seen as having certain 'liminal qualities' or 'liminal characteristics.' From this insight to the idea more generally that "[n]ormal patterns of classification fade or are turned upside down during Ramadan,"[52] the step is too far for me, however. (This issue will be further discussed in chapter seven.)

[49] Buitelaar also notes this (1993: 156) when she says that 'her' three key concepts "also feature in the celebration of the other religious feasts," but that they not are "articulated as clearly as during the fast." Unfortunately, Buitelaar only mentions "feasts" and not other more non-festive religious rituals.

[50] The testimony of faith (A. *shahādah*) should ideally be pronounced in Arabic, and thus invites its articulator to a wider community whose members share this ritual language to various degrees. In the five daily prayers (A. *ṣalāh*), Muslims all over the world turn to *Masjidu l-Ḥarām* in Mecca, and the distribution of the alms (A. *zakāh*) surely draws attention to the wider community. The annual pilgrimage to Mecca (A. *ḥajj*) is likewise very concerned with wider Islamic ideals. That Ramadan also involves notions of the Islamic *ʿummah* should thus not surprise us.

[51] Buitelaar 1993: 159ff.

[52] Buitelaar 1993: 181.

Østergaard: additional material on Morocco

The Danish historian of religion Kate Østergaard, has also paid attention to Ramadan in the Moroccan context.[53] As her ethnographic description is both relatively short and based only on observations in one single family in Casablanca, her data must be approached with some caution.[54] Nevertheless, her studies are important in that they throw some additional light on Buitelaar's description. We thus see that some of the phenomena we encountered in *Fasting and Feasting* are found in Østergaard's work—and her Moroccan family in Casablanca—too, whereas others are not. That houses are thoroughly cleaned prior to Ramadan is attested by Østergaard's experience, and she also notes the special Moroccan foodstuff mentioned by Buitelaar.[55] Østergaard also confirms that Moroccan Muslims tend to sleep late during Ramadan, and that they are of the conviction that the beginning of Ramadan should be settled only after spotting the physical moon. Indeed, the new moon "must not be calculated."[56] To idea of letting girls fast for the first time during *laylatu l-qadr* is also to be found in Casablanca, as is the idea of the importance of the fifteenth of Ramadan.[57]

Østergaard could not find anything that resembled Buitelaar's "trance-nights,"[58] and did consequently not observe people lighting incense on the 27th of Ramadan in order to 'guide' the returning spirits in Casablanca.[59] Neither did she find that women pay visits to the tombs of saints during *laylatu l-qadr*.[60] Interestingly (and misleadingly), Buitelaar pays very much attention to precisely these rituals: the trance-dance and the visits to various shrines. (And this is an example of what I mean when I say that many anthropologists in Muslim surroundings focus on what is *not* Islam.)

As Buitelaar, Østergaard fails to discuss the Koranic goal of Ramadanic fasting: *taqwā*. Instead she states that the "object of Ramadan can be said to be the sanctification (*helligholdelsen*) of the revelation of the Koran."[61] As a consequence of this, a large portion of her work on Ramadan is dedicated to *laylatu l-qadr*. Resembling Buitelaar's work, discussions of the *tarāwīḥ* and *ʿīd* prayers are absent in Østergaard's studies. This is significant, for Østergaard criticizes those scholars who just focus on *either* of the two sides of 'normative' or 'practical' Islam. More precisely, she criticizes anthropolo-

[53] Østergaard 1994, Østergaard 1996.
[54] Østergaard is aware of this, and says she makes no claims of presenting a representative description of the broader layers of Moroccan society (1994: 51).
[55] Østergaard 1994: 53. In contrast to Buitelaar, Østergaard (1994: 62) also notes the importance of dates, and mentions (1994: 53) some kind of pancakes.
[56] Østergaard 1994: 56.
[57] Østergaard 1994: 65ff.
[58] Østergaard 1994: 55.
[59] Østergaard 1994: 73.
[60] Østergaard 1994: 72.
[61] Østergaard 1994: 95.

gists for regarding Islamic formal rituals as uninteresting.[62] Again, it is probably her—in this respect—disadvantaged position as a women that has rendered her unable of studying these highly important (and 'normative') Ramadanic rituals.

JORDAN

Richard T. Antoun's article[63] on Ramadan in a Jordan village provides us only with little ethnographic information, as the focus is on "social, political and economic relations" rather than on "ritual and belief."[64] Antoun is thus interested in the effects of Ramadanic fasting on various sets of relations. He observes that "the Islamic norm which receives the strongest affirmation during Ramaḍān is generosity,"[65] and discusses how this softens economic inequalities during the month of fasting. When it comes to the social relations, he notices an increased social interaction during Ramadan, with its invitations, visits, and opportunities for reconciliation. The primary occasion for this is the feast concluding the month. Apart from the common visits, congratulations, and handshakes, Jordan Muslim men also send special gifts (A. *ʿīdīya*) to females who have married outside the patrilineal group.[66] The sending of such gifts to close female relatives is regarded as obligatory. It is during the *ʿīd* festival that political relations are guarded over too, and this by means of visits to political leaders and to members of other clans.[67]

Antoun observes certain practices that we need to note here. The first is that boys generally enter the village mosque for the first time during Ramadan, and are 'initiated' to the world of men at that occasion.[68] It is more common for both boys and men (and girls and women!) in Java to visit the mosque during Ramadan than during any other month of the year, but there is no idea among the Javanese that boys should enter a mosque for the first time during the fasting month. Neither is there in Java a "Festival of Old Women" (A. *ʿīd al-ʿajāʾis*) after six days of additional fasting in the month of *Shawwal*, as Antoun reports there is in Jordan.[69] There is no need for Javanese women to arrange a separate festival a week after the *ʿīd* proper, since they partake in the 'original' festivities at the same conditions as men do. Other Ramadan related practices that Antoun observes in Jordan include the performance of twenty units of *tarāwīḥ* prayers (by men only), the recitation of

[62] Østergaard 1994: 1.
[63] The article was published in *Muslim World* in two installments in 1968 (Antoun 1968a, Antoun 1968b).
[64] Antoun 1968a: 36.
[65] Antoun 1968a: 39.
[66] Antoun 1968b: 95.
[67] Antoun 1968b: 99.
[68] Antoun 1968b: 99.
[69] Antoun 1968b: 100.

mawālid (A., panegyric poems in praise of the prophet), the recitation of the Koran, the circumcision of boys, and the commemoration (including a special *mawlid*) of *laylatu l-qadr*.[70] One wonders of there is a connection between the circumcision of boys and their first entrance to the mosque; in Java, boys are aggregated to the male Muslim community at the occasion of circumcision (whatever month that may take place in). Circumcision itself is occasionally referred to by the term *ngislamake* (J., to make someone a Muslim).

Finally, we should note that it in Jordan is not the *quantity* of food that increases during Ramadan, but rather the *quality*. In fact, the regular three meals a day are replaced by two meals during Ramadan.[71] Similar conditions may be observed in Java (but apparently not in Morocco).

TURKEY

Fallers: Advent and Ramadan

Lloyd A. Fallers discusses in his article "Notes On An Advent Ramadan" the "holy months" of Ramadan and Advent.[72] Being a Christian anthropologist in Turkey during a time (1968) when the two "months" coincided, comparison between them came natural, as each of them, in the word's of Faller, "celebrates God's deliverance of Himself to man."[73] Instead of providing ethnographic information on Ramadan in a Turkish context, however, the article is more concerned with discussing the author's own theological convictions and the relation of religion and society in Turkey on a more general level. The little Ramadanic information that is presented deals with a mosque meeting during *Berat Gecesi* (T., A. *nisfu Shaᶜbān*),[74] the celebration of *Kadir* (T., A. *laylatu l-qadr*) and the organizing of special *konuṣma* (T.) 'talks,' resembling the Javanese *kultum*, during Ramadan.

Yocum: Ramadan in Rural Turkey

In 1990, Ramadan did not coincide with Advent but rather with Easter, something which motivated Glenn Yocum to name his article on Ramadanic practices in rural Turkey, "Notes on an Easter Ramadan."[75] Despite this, Yocum's article is not, however, concerned with Christian ideas or practices; the title is merely alluding to that of Faller's.

Yocum observes that Ramadan is carefully observed in rural Turkey, and that people fast for various reasons. A commonly given reason is that

[70] Antoun 1968b: 101.
[71] Antoun 1968b: 100.
[72] Fallers 1974.
[73] Fallers 1974: 37.
[74] The 'T' here refers to Turkish, of course.
[75] Yocum 1992.

fasting is good for the health (it "rests the stomach," in the words of one of Yocum's informants), and another is that fasting is a "debt" Muslims owe God.[76] These motivations for Ramadanic fasting may be found in Java too, but many would also draw attention to the Koranic goal of fasting, i.e., the attainment of *takwa*. As already quoted above, Yocum's informants "seldom, if ever" referred to the Koran when asked about why they held the fast.[77] This I find as peculiar as Yocum's failed discussion of it.

Yocum himself observed the fast and participated in various Ramadan rituals. We thus find short mention of the *teravih* (T., A. *tarāwīḥ*) nightly prayers in his work. It is said that the *teravih namaz* (A. *ṣalāh*) consist of twenty *rakaᶜāt*, which is a commonly performed number in Indonesia too. But then Yocum says that

> The regular retiring prayers add an additional thirteen *rekat*s (seven done in unison led by the imam, the other six done individually at one's own pace), bringing the total at the mosque's nighttime Ramadan prayer ritual to thirty three.[78]

Apart from stating that this takes about forty-five minutes to complete and that men are far more likely to perform them in the mosque than are women, Yocum discusses these prayers no more. Readers are left wondering what prayers he has actually observed.

Further, Yocum discerned three "special ritual occasions" during Ramadan: *Kadir Gecesi* (T., A. *laylatu l-qadr*) on the 27th of Ramadan, cemetery visiting on the last of the month, and the *Şeker Bayramı* (T., A. *ᶜīdu l-fiṭr*) at the time of the conclusion of the fast.[79] The commemoration of *Kadir Gecesi* was not as elaborate as he had expected, and he only noted that the *teravih* prayers were extended with yet two *rekat* ("making a grand total of thirty-five") and that the congregation lingered on in some "chanting of Arabic verses" he could not locate.[80] It is interesting that the rural Turkish Muslims pay their respects at the cemeteries during the last of Ramadan, and that they do so congregationally after the performance of the *ikindi* prayer in the mosque. In Java, as we have seen, people are more probable to visit the graves of their ancestors immediately prior and/or after Ramadan. During the "Candy Festival" (T. *Şeker Bayramı*), Turkish Muslim men attend the special *ᶜīd* prayer, and people who can afford it use new clothes and give toys to their children, in addition to paying visits to friends and relatives during this day. There are ideas that people should forgive each other during this feast,[81]

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[76] Yocum 1992: 212f.
[77] Yocum 1992: 213.
[78] Yocum 1992: 216.
[79] Yocum 1992: 219ff.
[80] Back in America, an Egyptian Muslim informed him that this 'Arabic chanting' probably was the recitation of chapter 97 of the Koran, which deals with *laylatu l-qadr* (1992: 219, n. 32). I am more inclined to believe that the congregation recited some *dhikr* litanies, however.
[81] Yocum 1992: 221.

but they do not seem to be as emphasized in the Turkish context as in the Javanese.

Finally, we should note that Yocum's rural Turkish informants ate some special foodstuff during Ramadan, as we have seen is common in other parts of the Muslims world as well. They did not, however, says Yocum, indulge in "elaborate, late or all-night communal feasting of a kind sometimes described for other Muslim settings."[82] As we have learned, neither do the Javanese.

SAUDI ARABIA

Mai Ahmad Zaki Yamani is the author of an article on the observance of the Ramadan fast in Saudi Arabia.[83] We learn from this article that "[s]ocial behaviour in Saudi Arabia is markedly different during Ramadan from that during the other months of the year," and that virtually everybody is fasting.[84] As in Java, Ramadan in the Saudi Arabian context seems to be a joyous affair that is waited upon by its observers. Saudi ideas about the religious importance of the month (such as divine forgiveness and multiple divine rewards) seem to be similar to their Javanese counterparts, but many social (day-to-day) practices take another turn in Saudi Arabia. There is, for example, a special pattern for how young couples are supposed to break the fast during the month. On the first of Ramadan they must go to the paternal home of the husband for the breakfast. During the second day they are supposed to go to the paternal home of the wife, whereas the third day is reserved for an older brother or sister of either the husband or the wife. As Ramadan goes on, most relatives should be included in this fast-breaking schedule, and Yamani thus speaks of Ramadan as a "time for the family."[85] (In Java, Ramadan definitely is a time for the family too, but the extended family is paid intense attention only during the feast concluding the month. During the fasting month itself, it is the core family that stands in focus.)

When it comes to the food consumed during Ramadan, Yamani notes that there are some special dishes and drinks that are served exclusively during the fast. Interestingly, the Saudis temporarily leave behind Western cooking during Ramadan, and turn to more 'traditional' food. In addition, the food during Ramadan is "very elaborate and presented in large quantities."[86] That the Saudis put such a stress on food is perhaps connected to their habit of reversing the day during Ramadan. Many day-to-day activities are performed

[82] Yocum 1992: 209. Contrary to this, Faller (1974: 38) talked about "over-eating" during Ramadan (and Christian Lent).
[83] Yamani 1987.
[84] Yamani 1987: 80f. Yamani mentions that the question "Are you fasting?" only is posed to children since it is taken for granted that all adults observe the fast.
[85] Yamani 1987: 81.
[86] Yamani 1987: 82.

during the night, and, says Yamani, it is only after the *tarāwīḥ* prayers that "life seems to begin."[87] People thus stay up all night, and shops often do not close until 2 a.m. Working hours too are changed during Ramadan. Banks may thus have their employees work from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and then again from 10 p.m. to 1 a.m. This starkly contrasts with conditions in Java, where life pretty much goes on as usual during Ramadan.

Yamani also notes that there during the *ʿīd* festival is a special present, the *ʿīddiya*, that is offered by the older to the younger, from the men to the women, and by the master of the house to the servants.[88] However, the *ʿīd* itself is not as festive in Saudi Arabia as in Java, we learn. In fact, many well-to-do Saudis (with which Yamani's article primarily is concerned) leave the country during the end of Ramadan and thus celebrate the *ʿīd* abroad. The Javanese, on the other hand, would do anything to get home during the feast.

Yamani's article is highly interesting, but it is unfortunately rather short and (as a consequence) shallow. Its readers are left with numerous questions including, for example, the nature of the *tarāwīḥ* prayers, the existence of pre-Ramadanic rituals, and the ways in which the Koran is recited during Ramadan, and to what extent.

'SWAHILI-LAND'

P.J.L. Frankl has written a short article entitled "The Observance of Ramaḍān in Swahili-land (with special reference to Mombasa)" in consultation with Yahya Ali Omar.[89] This is a confusing article due to the fact that readers never know what practices can be observed today, and which belong to a colonial past. Apart from often failing to discuss the relation between some older descriptions of Ramadan in 'Swahili-land' and the contemporary situation, Frankl also has a tendency of mixing the tenses in his article. It is thus hard to know what the following quote, for example, actually refers to:

> On the eve of Ramaḍān small groups of Muslims throughout the world of Islam assemble at mosques, or on roof-tops or at road-sides to search the night sky. In Mombasa parties returning from their shambas [pre-Ramadanic picnics] would dance their way back to the town... [...] This practice was known as [...] 'going to fetch the new moon.'[90]

Readers are left uncertain as to whether such practices still are observed by Muslims in Mombasa.

Nevertheless, some noteworthy ethnographic information concerning Ramadan in Swahili-land becomes available to us through this article. For

[87] Yamani 1987: 83.
[88] Yamani 1987: 85.
[89] Frankl 1996.
[90] Frankl 1996: 419.

example, the interesting fact that Swahili Muslims divide the year into two parts: Ramadan, and the rest. Furthermore, Ramadan is regarded as the last month of the Islamic year, despite the fact of it being 'only' the ninth month.[91] We thus learn that Ramadan is regarded as extremely important to the Swahili—indeed, by far the most important month of the year. We also learn that Swahili Muslims tend to arrange pre-Ramadanic picnics on public beaches, and processions in towns.[92]

According to a (in Java, at least) frequently cited *ḥadīth*, Ramadan is divided into three equally long parts: that of blessings (A. *raḥmah*), that of forgiveness (A. *maghfirah*), and that of the release from the fire (A. *ᶜitqun mina n-nār*). Some Swahili Muslims, however, divide it into three other parts: the decade of the Arabs, the decade of the Swahili, and the decade of the Bajuni (who live in the north of Swahili-land). Others say that focus should be on repentance, belief, and worship during these three parts respectively.[93] This thus seems to be a Swahili variation of a normative theme.

Frankl has also observed that people during Ramadan "all day and every day" live their lives "saying or chanting a kind of *duᶜaˀ*,"[94] and that Swahili Muslims increase the quality but not necessarily the quantity of food during Ramadan. Indeed, *isrāf* or extravagance is avoided during this month.[95] Frankl also draws attention to some religious practices beyond fasting that are widely attested in Java too—for example, the *tarawehe* (A. *tarāwīḥ*) prayers, Koranic recitation, mosque classes, the commemoration of *laylatu l-qadr*, the payment of the *zakātu l-fiṭr*, and the *ᶜīd* prayers on *ᶜīdu l-fiṭr*.[96] These phenomena are not discussed at any length, however, and readers are left wondering about, for example, female presence at the *ᶜīd* prayer, and the number of *rakaᶜāt* performed during the nightly *tarāwīḥ* prayers. Another phenomenon—that is neither attested by my experience of Ramadan in Java, nor extensively discussed by Frankl—is a special 'mosque service' on the eve of *ᶜīdu l-fiṭr* once the new moon has been sighted. This is referred to as the *iḥyāˀ* or 'revival', 'return to life' in the Swahili context,[97] but what this term in turn refers to is unfortunately not discussed by Frankl.

UNIFORMITY, DIVERSITY AND LITTLE MATERIAL

Apart from some very specific Ramadanic peculiarities in various contexts, this section has provided us with two major understandings. The first is that the observance of Ramadan on this earth of mankind is characterized by both

[91] Frankl 1996: 417.
[92] Frankl 1996: 418.
[93] Frankl 1996: 420.
[94] Frankl 1996: 421.
[95] Frankl 1996: 424.
[96] Frankl 1996: 426f.
[97] Frankl 1996: 427.

uniformity and diversity. That is, contemporary Ramadan is both homogenous and heterogeneous if seen in a wider perspective. We have seen that the observers of the Ramadanic fast, from Morocco to Bali, share some basic understandings of the nature of the month. They all agree, for example, that fasting during Ramadan is obligatory for all Muslims (with some exceptions discussed elsewhere), and that Ramadan is the month chosen by God for the revelation of the Koran. They also agree that the *tarāwīḥ* prayers constitute a splendid form of supererogatory devotion during Ramadan, and that this month is peculiarly well suited for the complete Koran recitation. They differ, however, in their implementation of these ideas. Javanese (and other Indonesian) Muslims put much more stress on the *tarāwīḥ* prayers than most other Muslims, it seems, and the "preferred days" (to use Buitelaar's words) are differently appreciated in, say, Morocco and Java. Observing this, we may securely talk about a 'Javanese Ramadan,' a 'Saudi Arabian Ramadan,' a 'Palestinian Ramadan,' etcetera. This is not to say that they substantively differ in meaning to their observers, but rather only that they take quite different forms in various cultural (and historical we may presume, although no historical material is included in this work) settings.

The second major understanding of this section is that the material written in English on contemporary Ramadanic practices is peculiarly limited. Why Islamic ordinary rituals largely have failed to attract the attention of Western scholars has been discussed earlier in this work; suffice it here thus to mention that it is very unfortunate that such is the case. It hampers our understanding of contemporary Islam—in a time in which a more nuanced picture of this religion is needed, though rarely sought for—and it blurs our sight when we try to see what is characteristically Moroccan about Moroccan Ramadan, and what is characteristically Saudi about Saudi Arabian Ramadan. Even worse, as a result of this state of affairs, we know little or nothing about, say, French, Suriname, or Pakistani Ramadan. We may only hope that they will attract future academic attention.

CHAPTER SEVEN

ANALYZED RAMADAN
CONCLUSIONS AND INTERPRETATIONS

Our journey on the Ramadanic road is approaching its end here. We have voyaged through both classical Arabic and modern Indonesian texts, and we have tried to make our way through the thickets of the actual Javanese Ramadanic practices and ideas. In order to understand all this, we had to make a rather lengthy cruise on the road entitled 'Islam in Java,' on which we found some needed signposts. We have also gone far away—temporarily leaving the safe cradle Java constitutes for anyone who loves her—and learnt something about how Ramadan is observed in non-Indonesian contexts. Before that, however, we turned inwards and maneuvered between some specific Javanese Ramadan expressions, or rather, between the relationships between them. It has been both a long and a short excursion, and for me at least, sitting at the wheel, it has been both interesting and fun. Before pulling over for this time, we need to take a look in the rear view mirror, using some analytical glasses. This is also a good time for reminding ourselves that the ultimate goal of a journey like this is not so much the destination as the journeying itself.

In the introduction to this work I stated my intentions with some clarity. Below I will return to them all, and present a few additional discussions of Ramadan and Islam in Java, and how they might be studied.

RAMADAN AND JAVA

I have never spent Ramadan in a majority Muslim country except Indonesia, and this is rather unfortunate. From what I learn from colleagues and friends who have lived or spent some time in Muslim countries, however, the Javanese Ramadan case is somewhat extraordinary. Or, rather, few Muslim com-

munities seem to lay so much stress on Ramadanic fasting (and additional Ramadanic rituals) as such communities do in Indonesia. True, talking about non-Indonesian Muslims, people—Muslims and non-Muslims alike—often stress that Ramadan is the most important Islamic ritual to these communities. We encountered this in chapter six above. Nevertheless, there are reasons for us to suppose that the observance of Ramadan in Java belongs to the more scrupulously and joyously performed rituals in the Muslim world. The performance of the supererogatory nightly prayers, the *traweh*, in Java, for example, seem to have few equivalents outside Indonesia when it comes to their number of performers, alleged importance, and the carnival-like atmosphere they create during thirty or twenty-nine nights each year. As it happens, Javanese Muslims—*both* male and female, which in itself is extraordinary, it seems, in the Muslim world—tend to regard these prayers as obligatory, although Islamic jurisprudence is non-ambiguous in its deeming of them as *sunnah*, or non-compulsory (yet recommended). People who during the rest of the year has little time or energy left for the five daily (and, according to Islamic law, obligatory) prayers, suddenly show up at their mosques, ever ready to devote a substantial part of the Ramadanic nights to supererogatory devotions. Hence, recommended prayers are regarded as compulsory during Ramadan, whereas the obligatory daily prayers outside the fasting month are regarded as voluntary, according to some Javanese Muslims.

The celebration at the end of the month, *Lebaran* or *Idul Fitri*, is also a highly emphasized occasion in Java and the rest of Indonesia. In Arabic this feast is known as *ʿīdu l-saghīr*, or the Little Feast, in contrast to the feast held in connection with the annual pilgrimage. In Indonesia, however, the feast concluding Ramadan is *saghīr* in no way. On the contrary, it is far more joyous and elaborate than the later *ʿīdu l-aḍḥā*. In the words of the respected intellectual Nurcholish Madjid, *Idul Fitri* is the "peak of the socio-religious life of the Indonesian people."[1] Indeed, the *Lebaran* feast is of enormous importance to Indonesian Muslims (and of some importance to non-Muslims too), who all strive to go back (I. *mudik*) to their native areas some time prior to the last of Ramadan. As a consequence, Indonesia probably hosts one of the largest annual mass mobilization activities in the world in connection with *Lebaran*. The prolonged economic crises, which has affected the Indonesian people in numerous ways, seems to have had a hard time in reducing the number of Indonesians who *mudik* each year. If Indonesians living outside their natal area only go home once a year, it will definitely be during *Idul Fitri* (and this is as true for people living outside Indonesia as well as those who have tried their luck on a different Indonesian island). As they say, there can be no *Lebaran* without *mudik*, just as there can be no Ramadan without *traweh* prayers.

In Java (and the rest of the archipelago) Ramadan is a joyous affair. Contrary to popular assumptions among non-Muslims in the West, Ramadan

[1] Gaus 2000: 127.

is generally not regarded just as an annual—and immensely heavy—burden. (Of course, some Javanese complain about the hardships of Ramadan, but they are very few to the best of my knowledge. Moreover, most of them would probably disagree if someone suggested that these hardships would not be intensely and divinely reimbursed, and thus worth living with for a while. Should they yet agree with this hypothetical statement, they could simply choose not to fast, since there is no state enforcement of the Ramadanic fast in Indonesia.) Instead, in Java Ramadan is waited upon, longed for, and enthusiastically received once it arrives. Preparations begin during the month of *Ruwah*, and things only go back to 'normal' about two months later in the month of *Sawal*. In between these months, the *Pasa* fast has been enjoyed, for, indeed, the Ramadanic month is *enjoyable* according to Javanese (contemporary) standards.

Due to the popularity of the annual fast, Ramadan has generated a wide range of different media expressions in Indonesia. In chapter four we thus encountered handbooks, articles, sermons, music, poetry, and more, that all had as their main theme the fast of Ramadan. These pieces of work—that are of varying quality and standards—are widely read, sung, and listened to in Indonesia, and there seems to be a never ceasing need to publish more handbooks, write more articles, and compose more songs. Bookstores often have specific sections (strategically placed just inside the door) for the fast around Ramadan, and newspapers are overwhelmed by freelance articles about it. Television programs (and the advertisements in-between them) are imbued with Ramadanic themes alluding to the fasting Muslims' sensitivities, as are songs heard on radio, in shopping malls, etc. Together with a variety of other changes—including the increasing usage of Islamic dress, Islamic greetings, and crowded Islamic stores—felt in *Ruwah*, these conditions contribute to the temporary Islamization Java undergoes during Ramadan. Many devout Muslims in Java often express the wish that their societies look 'Ramadan-like' during the entire year, and that Ramadan not just should be a temporary upheaval of various perceived immoralities. In line with this way of reasoning, a work edited by Ramli Bihar Anwar was published in 2002 with the apt title "Ramadanizing All Months: Fasting as a Spiritual Ladder."[2] Here, as in numerous other contexts in Indonesia, Ramadan is seen as a momentum for social, political, religious, and even economical change, and this on both a personal as well as a societal level. Interpreting their religion in their own peculiar way, Muslim radicals in Indonesia use this 'momentum' to smash bars and discos, and harassing prostitutes and gamblers. Non-radicals too, we should mention, are in general harsher against seeming immoralities of various kinds in connection with Ramadan; having a bulldozer demolish some bottles of booze in the town square consequently attracts a crowd of enthusiastic on-lookers.

[2] Anwar 2002. In original, the title goes *Meramadhankan Semua Bulan: Puasa Sebagai Tangga Ruhani.*

Fasting during Ramadan is a 'ritual', we may say, but it would perhaps be more suitable to refer to the Ramadanic fast as a 'ritual complex,' since it contains so many different sub-rituals. We understand that abstaining from food, drink, and sexual intercourse during the Ramadanic daylight hours is just a part of the whole 'Ramadan ritual,' which includes so many important rituals that have 'nothing' to do with the physical fast itself. Consider (again) for example the performance of the *traweh* prayers, the intensified recitation of the Koran, and the practice of visiting graves and throwing special *slametan* rituals, which all stand outside the actual fast. Though devoid of direct connections to the practices of abstaining from food and drink during daylight hours, these rituals are nevertheless integral parts of the event known as 'Ramadan' in Java.

Moreover, in Java the fast of Ramadan has generated some specific Javanese rituals that have no or only vague counterparts in the rest of the Muslim world. Most important of these is perhaps the special *slametan* held during the month of *Ruwah*, that is, the *ruwahan*. In these rituals, the neighborhood men gather at the house of the ritual sponsor immediately after the *maghrib* sunset prayers, in order to listen to the intent (which they are already knowingly of since it is always the same) of the ritual, an extended prayer recited by an Islamic functionary, and some *salawat*, or praises of Muhammad, before they all 'accept' the ritual and its intent. As they wander of home again (some ten or fifteen minutes after the ritual commenced), all participants are given a box filled with newly blessed food which the neighborhood women have prepared during the last two days. The name of this ritual (*ruwahan*) and the Javanese name of the month corresponding to the Arabic Shaᶜbān (*Ruwah*) provide us with some hints about the meaning of the ritual. As mentioned in chapter five, *Ruwah* is grammatically linked to the Arabic word for soul (*rūḥ*, pl. *arwāḥ*), and Javanese Muslims are consequently rather busy with attending to the souls of their deceased relatives during this month. Throwing a *ruwahan* ritual is one means of doing this, as the primary intent of such a ritual is to pray for the deceased family members of the ritual sponsor. Visiting graves, *nyekar*, is another way of doing it. Javanese Muslims often go *nyekar* during the month of *Ruwah*, and then again in connection with the feast of *Lebaran*.

The occasion of *laylatu l-qadr*, or the Night of Destiny/Power, is celebrated or commemorated around the Muslim world as the night during which God chose to 'send down' His Koran to Muhammad. This bestowing of the Koran (A. *nuzūlu l-qurʾān*) upon the prophet occurred during the night of *laylatu l-qadr*, it is often argued. For those interested in Indonesian Ramadanic practices, however, some confusion is to be expected in connection with *Lailatul Qadar* and *Nuzulul Qur'an*. In line with Nurcholish Madjid, we must agree that *Nuzulul Qur'an* is a specific Indonesian tradition. It is commemorated officially during the 17th of Ramadan—perhaps due to the 'magical' qualities of the number seventeen in Indonesia (due, in turn, to the Indonesian Day of Independence which falls on the seventeenth of August)—,

whereas *Lailatul Qadar* is celebrated ten days later. As I acknowledged in chapter five above, I have failed to make much sense of the relationship between these two commemorations in Indonesia, and I have also noted a strong disinterest among ordinary Javanese Muslims in relation to it. To them, it is nothing but natural that two commemorations of what seems to be one and the same event are held during Ramadan.

In Java, *Ruwah* also hosts some pre-Ramadanic carnivals and festivals with processions and other festivities. These are not outspokenly 'religious' in character, but are nevertheless intimately linked to the coming month of fasting. They are ways of receiving (J. *nyambut*) the month of Ramadan, simultaneously as they provide the fasting Muslims with some last secular entertainment before the commencement of the more demanding fasting month. Much due to the efforts of Muslim radicals, many places of entertainment are closed—or open only under special circumstances—during Ramadan; a colorful procession through the city center may thus seem attractive on the last day of *Ruwah*.

The relationship between Java and Ramadan, or rather, between Javanese Muslims and Ramadan, is thus a passionate one. Javanese Muslims respect, admire, and put their trust in Ramadan, and they often seem to experience that Ramadan feels the same way about them. The love is answered, so to say, and Ramadan can thus rightly be denoted—as it sometimes is—as *sepotong surga*, a piece of heaven (despite the Sanscritic origin of the Indonesian gloss for 'heaven').

RAMADAN AND THE FAMILY

The family ethos is strongly emphasized in Java during Ramadan. Everyone— children, young, old, males, females—partake in the ritual (albeit in their own ways), and they preferably do it *together*. To a large extent then, Ramadanic fasting in Java is not an individual affair. Family bonds are cared for and strengthened during the fasting month, and I believe this is one of the reasons for the popularity of Ramadan in Java. From the eating of the predawn *sahur* meal to the performance of the nightly *traweh* prayers, the family stands in focus. The Javanese tend to break the fast in their homes together with their families, and only rarely is the *buka* meal consumed outside the home. In those instances it happens, the whole family is bound to go. There is consequently no culture in Java for men to gather at street vendors or restaurants to break the fast, and neither do the women have their own get-togethers. Of those who go to the neighborhood mosque to break the fast, a majority, to be sure, is men and children (of both sexes). They do not break with this general emphasis on the family, but rather choose to spend a few nights in the mosque in order to socialize with the wider society too. Harmonious relations should not only characterize the core family, but also that family's bonds with their neighbors. That women only rarely break the fast in

the mosque is linked to them being busy preparing the later meals around this time.

Not only the core family stands in focus during Ramadan. The Javanese are very interested in their extended families, and their relations to members of them. Extended families are indeed extended in Java. It is not unusual, for example, that one knows the cousin of one's grandmother, or that one has a familiar relationship with the parent's of an uncle married into the family. Neither would it be considered strange if one suddenly should show up at the doorway of a hitherto unknown member of one's extended family. As long as one could explain one's relationship to the owner of the house, one would surely be invited to stay. It is also common in Java that one's identity is closely linked to another person's identity—more closely than is common in the West. When meeting people in Blora, for example, I sometimes refer to myself as 'the son-in-law of the midwife' or 'the son-in-law of *Pak Haji* that works at the bank.' People then understand my position in my (extended) family, and can go on trying to figure out whether or not we have some common bonds of family or friendship.

The month of fasting witnesses an increased number of visits between members of the extended family in Java. These do only rarely occur in connection with the time for the daily breaking of the fast—thus contrasting with reports from elsewhere—since that would put certain pressure on the host to prepare delicious food. In addition, Javanese tend to feel ill at ease when eating at the home of someone else. Visits within the extended family occur throughout the month, though there is an evident emphasis on the last third of the month, only to culminate during the feast of *Lebaran* that put an end to the fast.

That visits are more frequent during Ramadan than during the rest of the year is connected with the idea that not only divine—but also human—forgiveness should be sought during the fasting month. To pay someone a visit is also to pay one's respect towards her, and that should generate feelings of forgiveness and affection. In Indonesian there even exists a special word for such visiting: *silaturahmi*. Being derived from the two Arabic words for 'bond' or 'link' (*ṣilah*) and 'merciful' or 'compassionate' (*raḥīm*), the term itself pretty much describes what visits within the extended family means to the Javanese Muslims.

The culmination of the Ramadanic family *silaturahmi* occurs during *Idul Fitri*, as mentioned above. As many family members as possible go home to their natal areas (I. *mudik*) in connection with this feast, and to spend *Lebaran* away from one's relatives is often depicted as the worst of nightmares. Indeed, even those who live abroad try to get home during the end of the fast. *Idul Fitri* is a time of great social interaction, and it is again the (extended) family that stands in focus. During two or three days people go to see their relatives, and consciously postpone *silaturahmi* with people to whom they have other (non-blood) loyalties. Colleagues, friends, and members of the same badminton team thus have to wait to congratulate and ask for each

other's forgiveness until the end of the first week of *Sawal*, or even later. The point is that family matters have to be thoroughly taken cared for first. The notion of the extended family does not limit itself to the members who are still living, however. As we have seen, Javanese Muslims frequently visit the graves of their ancestors (J. *nyekar*) during the feast of *Lebaran* (and even before the commencement of Ramadan). This is because deceased family members still are family members, with whom one should uphold good relations. More importantly, one should pray for the well-being of the deceased, wherever they may be (the ambiguous ideas of the 'location' of the dead has been mentioned elsewhere). Visiting cemeteries is not the only way of conveying prayers for one's deceased relatives in Java—the special pre-Ramadanic *slametan* entitled *ruwahan* may just as well serve this purpose. Interestingly, the one practice seems not to exclude the other. On the contrary, people who throw *ruwahan* generally go *nyekar* too.

Connected to this general emphasis on the family during Ramadan is the life of the children during the month. During no time else are children left with so much freedom as during Ramadan: they can join in the pre-dawn *sahur* processions, follow *subuh* dawn lections, visit relatives, and gather together with family and friends for the *traweh* prayers in the mosque. Those who already attend primary school will indeed have to do all this, since their teacher in Islamic studies will scrutinize their 'Ramadan exercise books' once school has started again. Ideally and normally, children should stay at home after the sunset *maghrib* prayers, but this conception looses its foundations during Ramadan, when later prayers and other activities are preferably carried out. Children thus have a great deal of time for just playing around with their friends during Ramadan. In connection with the *traweh* prayers, for example, many children gather at the mosque just to play with their fellows. In between the lines of praying adults, children are thus running around, making loud noises. Few adults seem to care or even take notice of this.

The reason for letting children spend so much time just playing around during Ramadan is probably twofold. Firstly, all Javanese Muslims are very concerned that their children acquire a *positive* picture and experience of the month of fasting. The ideas they obtain concerning Ramadan as children are the ideas that will follow them throughout life. During the childhood years then, the foundations for a life-long love of Ramadan are laid down. The second reason is that fasting adults are not interested in reprimanding or scolding their children during Ramadan, as they are afraid the values of their fasting should be rejected by God (who, in the minds of the Javanese, is very caring and loving of children) should they do so. It is, so to say, safer just to let the kids do whatever they like to do. Moreover, as one mother told me (alluding to a well-known prophetic tradition), "the devils *are* chained during Ramadan, so what could possible go wrong if we let them go their own ways?"

Javanese Muslims are not solely focused on the family during Ramadan; the Muslim community (A. *ʿummah*, I. *umat*) in a wider sense is also focused upon during this month. One's relation to the local, national, or even international *umat* is more problematic, however, than the relationship one has with one's immediate family. On the one hand, fasting during Ramadan is thought to express the unity (and thus power) of the worldwide Muslim community. Muslims from all over the world partake in the ritual fasting, and there is consequently a strong sense of belonging felt among fellow Muslims during this month. This feeling is also sensed at the national level (thus uniting Muslims around the archipelago) and at the local equivalent. Ramadan is a time when former grudges, wrongdoings, and disputes are solved, forgiven, or at least temporarily forgotten, and the *umat* gathers together its strength for a manifestation of unity and harmony. On the other hand, as members of the Muslim community differ in their ways of perceiving Ramadan and its rituals, the fasting month also has a tendency of dividing that same *umat.* We have repeatedly seen, for example, that Javanese Muslims are divided into two large camps when it comes to questions pertaining to the deciding of the first of Ramadan, and the number of prayer cycles to be performed during the nightly *traweh* prayers. The Muslim modernists in Indonesia are inclined to prefer that the presence of the new moon (and hence commencement of Ramadan) is astronomically calculated, and being of the opinion that the *traweh* prayers should consist of only eight prayer cycles. The traditionalists, by contrast, rather have the new moon physically spotted, and prefer performing twenty prayer cycles of *traweh*. The idea of a worldwide Muslim unity being expressed during Ramadan is thus falsified at the most local level of the *umat*, as small neighborhoods often host both modernists and traditionalists. Such diversity and its discussions in the Muslim community has led scholars to speak about the relationship between modernists and traditionalists in Java as one characterized by fierce antagonism, as we saw in chapter two above.

My impression from Blora and Yogyakarta is that such characterizations of the Javanese Islamic landscape are overly dramatic or, at least, out-of-date. True, discussions regarding the ritual diversity the Javanese *umat* presents are bound to arise every now and then. (Lacking a central institution that decrees what Islam is and is not, this is perhaps natural.) However, these discussions are generally not as bitter and nasty in their overtones as one might expect from reading anthropological accounts of Javanese Islam. If I was interested in sustaining such a view of Islam in Java, I could easily have done it; I would just let the *traweh* dispute discussed in chapter five characterize the entire relationship between modernists and traditionalists in Java. In that case, I would, however, neglect all those other Muslims who have no problem at all with such ritual diversity, and I would, by consequence, thus focus on what is *not* Javanese Islam. This is not appealing to me. On the

other hand, I cannot disregard the fact that some Muslims in Java have serious problems with (ritual) diversity—this too would be misleading. I have consequently tried to provide a slightly more nuanced picture of Javanese Islam, and have thus drawn attention to the fact that most Javanese Muslims are not as bitter over this diversity as one might believe.

In fact, it is part and parcel of Javanese culture to guard over the harmony (J. *rukun*) and tranquility (J. *slamet*) of the society—despite certain differences. We have noticed that the (central) Javanese regard themselves as *alus*, or refined, in their manners. Open disputes and loud disagreements are thus rather rare in Java. Moreover, if one's own opinion deviates from that of someone else's, one is unlikely to state it straightforwardly, if one is to live up to the Javanese standards of good manners. Mark Woodward has made the apt observation that "[i]n Java, what is not said, or what is said only by implication, is often at least as important as what is said directly."[3]

The Javanese do not look for open disputes and debates, we may conclude.[4] To strengthen our case we may recall how Javanese Muslims during Ramadan pray as many cycles of *traweh* as they like, without that disturbing the rest of the community. Although it is common that entire congregations in mosques are in agreement as to whether these prayers should consist of eight or twenty cycles (mosques in themselves tend to 'be' either modernist or traditionalist), it also happens that mosques host mixed congregations and that some people thus leave the mosque after eight cycles, whereas others stay on for twelve more. The town mosque in Blora is an example of this: although a majority of those present in this mosque are traditionalists, not few members of the congregation leave the *traweh* after eight cycles due to their modernist preferences. As I thus first entered this mosque intending to follow the *traweh* prayers, the mosque official greeted me and explained that the *imam* would perform twenty prayer cycles, but that I could leave whenever I liked. I stayed for twenty cycles, but noticed that several others left after eight. They left, we may notice, very discreetly, and no one seemed to bother much. Those intending to stay until the end quickly filled out the gaps of those who had left, and the ritual could proceed—without any bitterness at all.

We may denote this quality of the Javanese as social competence or cultural smoothness. For another example of such smoothness, we can recall the celebration of *Idul Fitri* in 2002. This year, modernists and traditionalists did not agree on the date of this occasion—modernists intended to celebrate the end of the fast on Thursday, whereas the traditionalists were of the opinion that the fast would still go on that day. One could thus expect some awkwardness. However, the modernists held their celebrations surprisingly dis-

[3] Woodward 1993: 567.

[4] This is not only a positive thing; former President Megawati Soekarnoputri repeatedly refused to meet her political opponents in open debates as she could not refer such a practice to what she denoted as "eastern culture" (I. *budaya timur*).

creet during that Thursday. The recitation of the *takbiran* formulae was not broadcast in the mosques' amplifiers (the recitation was limited to *inside* the modernist mosques), and modernist Muslims made no big deal out of the *id* prayer, and neither did they disturb or distract their traditionalist fellows who still observed the fast (in fact, they waited until the following day to greet them).

Apart from this Javanese smoothness, we should also draw attention to the common Javanese idea that the ritual diversity Ramadan displays by no means touches upon the essentials of Islam. The dissent (A. *ikhtilāf*) that characterizes the views of some Ramadanic practices by modernists and traditionalists is in no way regarded as threatening to Islam as such. At its worst, it may spread schisms within the Muslim community, but even this 'function' is nowadays rather limited. Javanese Muslims tend to focus on larger issues that are common to the entire *umat* (such as social welfare, development, etc.). Especially younger Javanese Muslims seem to accept that their community to some extent is colored—not *plagued*—by ritual diversity.

RAMADAN AND WOMEN

Although this thesis not primarily has been concerned with the world of female Javanese Muslims, we have occasionally run into the female sphere of religious practices and ideas. As the world of Islam as described in academic works (including this one) generally is that of men, we may profit from a short summary of what has been said about the role of women in Ramadanic practices in Java here.

For, indeed, contrasting with popular views, Ramadan in Java shows that Ramadanic fasting—and, by extension, Islam—is not a male affair only. Quite on the contrary, female Muslims are as much part and parcel of Ramadanic rituals and Ramadanic daily life as male Muslims are in Java. Consider for example the *traweh* and *id* prayers, where a substantial part of the congregation (in the case of the *id* prayers, approximately fifty percent) is made up by women. Except from some occasions of the *id* prayer, women are segregated from the men while performing these supererogatory prayers. However, men are also segregated from women, since segregation always involves at least two parts: there are no reasons for us to look at segregation only from one angle. Furthermore, ritual segregation is hardly ever problematic in Java; instead, it is welcomed by both women and men who are of the opinion that they will be more successful in carrying out their ritual duties in the absence of the other—latently distracting—sex. (Moreover, if men want to sneak a quick look at women, or if women want to peek at men, there are plenty of other—and far better—occasions for this.) I knew of some young women in Yogyakarta who refused to go to mosques that had no—or in their eyes only insufficient—methods of segregating men and women. In some cases they went so far as to contract a male *imam* to come to their house each

night during Ramadan to hold a short sermon and lead the *traweh* prayers. For them, this was the ideal segregation, but we should note that such practices are rare in Java.

Discussing the relationship between male and female in a Ramadanic context, we may also draw attention to the fact that women as often as men visit their relatives' graves (J. *nyekar*) in connection with Ramadan, and that the Koran is recited during this month by both men and women. In mosques, male reciters are preferred, but otherwise it is my impression that women are more diligent in their Koran recitation than men. When it comes to the recitation of the *takbiran* formulae at the end of Ramadan, and the *rukyatul hilal* (I., moon spotting) sessions at the beginning of it, male reciters/witnesses are required. As we have learned above, the Shāfiᶜī legal school—to which most Indonesian Muslims adhere—prescribes that the new moon should be witnessed by men. Startling some Western feminists, perhaps, I have never heard any complaints about this state of affairs from Javanese women. Even if they could recite the *takbiran* or follow the *rukyatul hilal* sessions, few would have any time to do it, remembering that these events take place during the first and the last night of Ramadan. These are nights when Javanese women are at their busiest preparing either the first *sahur* meal of the month, or cookies and sweets for guests coming to celebrate *Lebaran*. As mentioned elsewhere, cooking is almost exclusively a female concern in Java, and many take pride in their cooking. By preparing nutritious and delicious food, some women say, they ensure that their families can observe the fast successfully. That women in Java are busy cooking while their men look for the new month should thus not be more disturbing than the observation that Christian women just prior to Christmas often are busy cooking (and take some pride in it) while their men is out buying a Christmas tree. It is a practical and needed division of work: the women are dependent on the activities of the men in order to know when they should conclude the month long fast, and the men are dependent on the women for sweets and cookies to celebrate it with.

In the description of the *ruwahan slametan* in chapter five I also drew attention to the role of women. *Slametan* get-togethers are often portrayed as exclusively male affairs, but nothing could be more wrong. The *slametan* does not commence with the gathering of the neighborhood men at the front verandah of the ritual sponsor, but rather a few days or even weeks before that. The decision to throw a ritual and all subsequent ritual preparations are in the hands of women. As the neighborhood women gather at the home of the sponsor to help with the cooking, we may also talk about a female part of the ritual that holds some similar functions as the male part, i.e., to guard over the tranquility (J. *slamet*) and harmony (J. *rukun*) that ideally should characterize any Javanese *kampung*. Talking about Ramadanic food and cooking, we should also note that Indonesian TV-stations broadcast loads of Ramadanic programs intended for women.

Sadly enough however, Javanese and Indonesian women only rarely contribute to what I have denoted as 'written Islam/Ramadan' in this work. Ramadanic handbooks[5] and articles are almost exclusively written by men; sermons are delivered by them; and songs sung by them (exceptions occur). Ramadanic soap operas clearly host female actors, but the directors are sure to be men. This uneven distribution of authorship of the written Ramadan is regrettable and hopefully regulated in the future. Considering the high number of female students at Islamic campuses in Indonesia, there are hopes that this will be done.

When it comes to questions of male and female ritual performance—we should note finally in this section—, Javanese Muslims (as their co-religionists elsewhere) are prone to cite verse thirty-five of *sūratu l-aḥzāb* which, according to them, seems to suggest that men and women are equal in this respect.[6]

RAMADAN AND JAVANESE ISLAM

This work has contested two common pictures of Islam in Java. The first of these declares that the religion of Java is only superficially Islamic (if at all), and that the hearts of the majority of the Javanese are closer to some odd mix of animism and Hindu-Buddhism than to Islamic principles. Such 'nominally' Muslim Javanese have been referred to as *abangan* whereas those attached to 'pure' Islamic practices have been called *santri*. The Javanese religious landscape has subsequently been depicted as one characterized by fierce antagonism between these two groups. The *abangan* majority is portrayed in its most grotesque form in the literature as pork-eating idolaters who refuse any involvement in normative Islamic rituals, whereas the *santri* are described as 'orthodox' Muslims: strict, zealous and uncompromising in their observance of the five pillars of Islam. Recent critic scholarship—both Western and Indonesian—has refuted this picture of Javanese Muslims and Islam in Java, and the present work supports this criticism. Discussions concerning religion in Java are not focused upon Islamic versus non-Islamic practices, but rather on the ritual diversity found *within* the Islamic community. Most Javanese can in this way be described as *santri*, although their *santri*-nesses take different forms. To characterize the Javanese Islamic landscape in terms of an alleged antagonism and hostility between *abangan* and *santri* is therefore obsolete. The diversity that can be found in the Javanese

[5] Ramadanic handbooks occasionally contain some special section on the relationship between Ramadan and women, but generally they are overly male in character. The one book dealing with fasting and women I have found in Indonesia is entitled "Thirty Questions on Fasting for Women" (I. *30 Masalah Puasa untuk Wanita*) and is a translated Arabic work with a male author (Al'Ali 2000).

[6] See QS 33:35.

community should rather be understood and explained in terms of intra-Islamic differences.

Realizing this, scholars have hence recently proposed other ways of understanding Islam in Java. Common to these is that they all portray Javanese Islam as *Islam* in the first place, and not as *not* Islam. Influenced by this way of understanding Javanese Islam, I was initially convinced that the Islamic scene in Java could be described in terms of Sufism, Islamic traditionalism, Islamic modernism, Islamic radicalism, and liberal Islam, with additional attention paid to certain institutions such as the Department for Religious Affairs and the Council for Indonesian Islamic Scholars. I hence paid these 'actors' some consideration in chapter two—a chapter written before I more thoroughly began scrutinizing Ramadanic practices in Java. When I did just that, however, I found that I had accepted the ideas and suggestions of those other contemporary scholars far too uncritically. I found that this second and more contemporary picture of Javanese Islam does not regard its object of study as a *religion* but rather as a political potential—albeit Islamic. In a political context, we can surely find both Muslim liberals and radicals, but seen from an ethnographic or anthropological point of view, these categories are hard to find, and all the more so outside Jakarta and some other major cities in the country. In Blora and Yogyakarta, I hence found that 'ordinary Muslims' still orient their religious lives according to the modernist-traditionalist axis, or, more correctly, according to the Muhammadiyah-Nahdlatul Ulama axis (without necessarily being members of these organizations). They thus frequently identified themselves as either *wong NU* or as *wong Muhammadiyah*—*wong* literally means 'person' in Javanese—and could relate neither to Islamic radicalism nor to liberal Islam or Islamic neo-modernism.

In other words, both one earlier (yet still too common) picture of Javanese Islam, and one more contemporary ditto have been refuted and contradicted by this work.

RAMADAN AND THE STUDY OF ISLAM

This work should also be understood as a critique of prevalent methods for studying Muslim societies. In chapter one I briefly discussed how scholars have been inclined to study Islam and Muslim practices in a framework consisting of a strong polarity (or, at its worst, an outspoken antagonism) between a perceived 'Great Tradition' and a likewise perceived 'Little Tradition.' Regardless of what these 'traditions' have been called, most scholars, I argued following amongst others Østergaard, have located the great tradition *above* its little counterpart. It has thus been regarded as superior to the little tradition in every possible way. Instead of this stiff (and misleading) picture of Islam, I suggested that we flip these entities to a horizontal position and that we realize that their relationship is not characterized by a one-way com-

munication. Instead, normative and lived Islam (as I choose to call them) communicate with each other, and none of them should be appreciated as 'more Islamic' than the other. Furthermore, I suggested that we take into consideration the non-Islamic culture/non-normative Islam, which also communicates with both lived and normative Islam. Facilitating this communication, I argued initially, is the 'written Islam' that I also denoted as 'cultural brokers.' As such, this written Islam has to be paid serious attention, and be lifted from its neglected position (created by Western scholars), as I maintained in chapter four. That the written Islam not always works very well as a cultural broker, as I found, does not mean that it need not be studied and focused upon. On the contrary, any study whishing to present a nuanced picture of a Muslim contemporary society ought to take local scholarship and various media expressions into serious consideration.

Hence, one may advantageously study Muslim societies and Muslim practices from three perspectives: the normative, the written, and the lived perspectives respectively. I let the term normative Islam—or, as in this case, normative Ramadan—refer to, in the word's of Jacques Waardenburg, "what Islam is held to prescribe." In my chapter on normative Ramadan (chapter three), I thus focused on the Koran, the prophetic traditions, and the consensus of the Muslim scholars, or, put in a more popular term, on Islamic Law. Though realizing that what is held to be normative is subject to change and that this normative-ness is dependent upon the historical and cultural context it is situated in, I argued that we may—and perhaps must?—generalize and try to say *something* about this normative Islam/Ramadan. Readers may of course ask for whom this is normative, but I suggest that a vast majority of (contemporary) Muslims—so-called 'mainstream Muslims'—would agree on what has been denoted normative Islam/Ramadan in this work. Naturally, special preference in this normative-ness has been given contemporary Javanese Muslims.

To study Muslim societies only from the perspective of normative-ness is not sufficient, however, since what Muslims believe they are *prescribed* to do and what they *actually* do not always coincide. We need then to look at lived Islam, i.e. to engage in practical ethnographic work. Scrutinizing this lived Islam, we will probably see that it contains both normative and non-normative elements, and that a diversity of practices will characterize any Muslim society. We will also see how lived Islam communicates and negotiates with its normative counterpart. Such has the case been with Javanese Ramadan, at least.

As already mentioned, this communication may at times—but not always—be facilitated by the 'written Islam,' and this is the third perspective we need to lay on Muslim societies. In a time when religious authority in the Muslim world quickly is fragmentized and disseminated, this perspective is of acute interest. Religious authority is no longer exclusively in the hands of the Islamic scholars (A. *ʿulamāʾ*); rather, anyone can—and does—interpret her religion. Chapter four I thus devoted to the different media expressions

Ramadan recently has generated in Indonesia, and discussed Ramadanic handbooks, articles, songs, sermons, poems, and soap operas.

The relationship between normative, written, and lived Ramadan in Java (and its counterparts elsewhere, we may assume) cannot be described as homogenous or having the same manifestation in every context, as I argued in chapter six. Instead, there is a multitude of relationships to be found in this respect. I showed, for example, that in some instances the written Ramadan has elaborated and developed upon certain normative ideas, whereas in the lived Ramadanic context such discussions spur little or no interest. In another case, however, we saw that the lived Ramadan has created a problem from the normative sources, and that it has fallen on the written Ramadan to try to solve this problem, or at least reduce the tensions it may produce. In yet other instances, we noticed that certain important practices in the lived Ramadan context in Java are discussed neither in the normative nor in the written Ramadan.

In discussing how Islam is lived, we should also to some extent try to focus on the every-day Islamic life, in order to have our readers realize that there is more to the lives of Muslims than religious rituals. I wish I could have discussed this at greater length in the present work—thus describing soccer games, Internet cafe atmospheres, and gardening in a Ramadanic context—, but that has not been possible. Nevertheless, I hope that some pictures of every-day Ramadanic life have been conveyed in this work (i.e., the hardships of *mudik*, the pawnshop affairs, the cooking, etc).

RAMADAN AND LIMINALITY

In the early twentieth century Arnold van Gennep classified certain rituals as *rites de passage*, and discerned in them three subdivisions: *rites de séparation*, *rites de marge*, and *rites de agrégation*.[7] These three subdivisions he also named pre-liminal rites, liminal (or threshold) rites, and post-liminal rites.[8] van Gennep argued that rites of passage "accompany a passage from one situation to another or from one cosmic or social world to another,"[9] and noted that the three subdivisions may be emphasized to varying degrees in various rituals. He further classified the rites of passage into a number of categories, and provided ample material from around the world in his quest for verifying his thesis.

van Gennep's ideas have had a wide influence, and Victor Turner is probably the scholar who has developed and elaborated upon them most

[7] van Gennep 1909. An English translation (to which references are made in this work) was published in 1960; in it, the terms rites of separation, rites of transition, and rites of incorporation are used.
[8] van Gennep 1960: 21.
[9] van Gennep 1960: 10.

thoroughly.[10] Turner's interest was primarily focused on the liminal period of the rites of passage. He argued that "liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial."[11] He further argued that these "liminal entities" compose an "unstructured or rudimentarily structured and relatively undifferentiated *comitatus*"[12]—a *communitas*. In a Lévi-Straussian fashion he also enumerated a long list of binary oppositions so as to highlight the relationship between liminality and structure/status system.[13]

I argue (as has Buitelaar done, though in a different way)[14] that we may preferably consider the Muslim fast of Ramadan in the light of van Gennep's and Turner's theories. We saw in chapter five above how the Javanese perform certain rites of separation during the month of *Ruwah*: consider for example the pre-Ramadanic parades, the *ruwahan* (which cannot be performed once Ramadan has started), and the attempts of settling one's relationships with persons with whom one has shared grudges. In addition, Muslim radicals in Indonesia use the pre-liminal period to ensure that perceived places of immorality will be securely closed during the fast, whereas local politicians, religious leaders, and police officers ritually smash bottles of beer during *Ruwah* as part of their separation from the daily life. On a more individual level, *Ruwah* also witnesses how Muslims prepare their existent religious paraphernalia to be used during the fast (such as washing the prayer rug and dusting of the Koran), or how they buy entirely new utensils (such as *sarung*, *peci*, or *mukena*).

During Ramadan proper, things are a bit betwixt and between, to use Turner's words. The acts of eating, drinking, and having sexual relations are prohibited between dawn and dusk, and this is obviously in contrast with 'normal' non-Ramadanic behavior. In addition, Javanese Muslims stress that the relationships between members of the Muslim community should ideally be characterized by equality, egalitarianism, and a lack of differentiation during Ramadan. Indeed, these qualities are felt to a certain degree in Java during Ramadan, and many Javanese would like such a Ramadan-like society all year round ('Ramadanize all months!').

Life during Ramadan is not entirely liminal, however, and fasting Muslims do not compose a perfect *communitas*. Speaking of conditions in Morocco, Buitelaar says that "[t]o describe the social relations between people

[10] See for example Turner 1969. Note, however, that both van Gennep and Turner primarily focused on the experiences of the individual during certain rituals. Since then, the theoretical perspective on liminality has been broadened and employed in contexts other than those studied by van Gennep and Turner. The original benefits from this perspective have thus partly been left behind. Nevertheless, there are advantages in regarding certain rituals or ritual complexes (as Ramadan) in the light of liminality, I argue here.
[11] Turner 1969: 95.
[12] Turner 1969: 96.
[13] Turner 1969: 106f.
[14] Buitelaar 1993: 159ff.

during Ramadan in terms of *communitas* would be to present an idealized image of the situation."[15] This holds true for Java too; we may only recall certain inner-Islamic differences the Javanese *umat* expresses during Ramadan to ascertain that such is the case. That Ramadanic life not is entirely liminal can further be seen from the fact that normal life pretty much goes on as usual during the fasting month in Java. True, working hours may be shortened under certain circumstances (but this does not mean that banks and stores are open during nights instead!), but the general impression is that commercial and bureaucratic life goes on in a manner not very different from non-Ramadanic contexts. People still go to work during Ramadan, and various mundane activities continue to spin the wheel of an ordinary day. Should Ramadan be entirely characterized by an "anti-structure,"[16] then Muslims should—amongst other things—sleep during the entire day, refrain from working, not pay attention to sex distinctions, and engage in lavish feasts during nighttime. (Wait a minute... Is not this indeed a general Western perception of the Muslim fast?)

We may say that Ramadan holds certain liminal qualities, or that it has a certain liminal character. Apart from the examples mentioned above, this liminality is also expressed in the life of children during the fast. Due to the endeavors of former President (and chairman of Nahdlatul Ulama) Abdurrahman Wahid, children are free from school (in most cases) during Ramadan, and they spend both days and nights playing with friends. Whereas during non-Ramadanic months children ideally do not leave their homes after dusk (which occurs around sex p.m.), Ramadan presents them—by way of the supererogatory *traweh* prayers—with opportunities for being out until eight or even nine o'clock. Another reason for leaving home after dusk are the special 'night fairs' (I. *pasar malam*) that travel around the island in connection with Ramadan. Children are also left freer during the fasting month as compared to during other months, and this is probably due to the fact that the grown-ups have no whish of reprimanding their children during Ramadan (something which is due, as mentioned above, in turn, to a fear that their fasting will not be accepted by the children-loving God). Furthermore, it is a common belief in Java that the devils (J. *setan*) during non-Ramadanic months wander freely around after the *maghrib* dusk prayers. However, as all devils are thought to be chained during the fasting month, this cannot hold true for Ramadan. Adding further to the liminal character Ramadan presents children with in Java, is the presence of firecrackers (which is strictly limited to Ramadan) and the nocturnal *tek-tekan* sessions, in which kids go around their neighborhoods announcing that the time for the *sahur* meal is approaching. To walk around one's neighborhood with friends at 2 a.m. beating drums

[15] Buitelaar 1993: 160.
[16] This term is found in the very title of Turner's work (1969).

in order to awaken the adults would be unthinkable outside a Ramadanic context.[17]

When Muslim men and women perform their prayers together, they do so in a segregated manner (i.e., separated from each other). In chapter five, however, I drew attention to the fact that the *id* prayer under certain circumstances may be performed without paying any heed to this normal segregation of the sexes: men and women may perform the prayers side by side. This is truly liminal, I would say, and the only occasion in which a similar manner is observed is during the performance of the prayers in Mecca during the annual pilgrimage, the *ḥajj*. In Mecca, this is partly due to logistic problems, and partly to the probability that the *ḥajj* is the most liminal of all Muslim rituals. In Blora, I argue that the mixing of the sexes has similar reasons, i.e., both logistic problems and a sensed liminality. Indeed, the entire *Lebaran* feast—which is initialized by the *sholat id*—can be said to have a liminal character.

Let us return to van Gennep. After the rites of separation (during *Ruwah*) and the rites of transition (during Ramadan), the rites of incorporation occur (during *Sawal*). We have seen how Indonesians strive to make their ways back to their natal areas (I. *mudik*) in connection with the end of the fast. Indeed, to *mudik* is of extreme importance to fasting Muslims in Indonesia, who often say that there can be no *Lebaran* without *mudik*. In other words, one cannot return to (or be incorporated into) the post-Ramadanic society if one does not *mudik*. This, in turn, is caused by the felt need to engage in *silaturahmi*, *syawalan*, and *halalbihalal*, i.e. to ask relatives and friends for forgiveness (and to be asked for the same thing).

We may thus regard the performance of the Ramadanic fast as a rite of passage, in which Ramadan proper is characterized to a certain degree by something which may be referred to as liminality. In addition to this, the Ramadanic fast may also be divided into thirty (or twenty-nine) lesser *rites de passage*, as every day during Ramadan can be understood in terms of separation (the *sahur* meal), transition (the daily fast), and incorporation (the *buka* meal). As if this was not enough, Ramadan is not so much a single ritual as a ritual complex hosting several sub-rituals, and many of these sub-rituals too may be seen in the light of van Gennep's ideas, and Turner's elaborations of them. To say that Ramadan is entirely liminal or that the Muslim community constitutes a perfect *communitas* during Ramadan, however, would be faulty.

[17] Buitelaar (1993: 168f) has argued that a child's first fast during Ramadan can be seen as a rite of initiation (which is a sort of rite of passage, according to van Gennep) by way of which he or she is incorporated into the Muslim community. This idea cannot be verified by the Javanese case; in Java to make a Muslim (J. *ngislamake*) of a boy is to have him circumcised, whereas for girls there seems to be no specific ritual for making them members of the Muslim community.

To look at rituals primarily (or only) from their functional meaning—in a Malinowskian or Radcliffe-Brownian way—is long dated in the study of history and anthropology of religions. However, just as we can argue that the observance of Ramadan in Java expresses some liminal qualities, so can we say that it expresses some functional equivalents. To a certain degree, it is indeed tempting to view one's material in the light of functionalist ideas, and as long as one does not take the arguments too far, it is also legitimate, I hold.

Without thus pushing the limits, I would say that one 'function' of Ramadan is to bring harmony and unity to the Muslim family and community. We have repeatedly seen how Javanese Muslims increase their socialization with members of their extended families during Ramadan, and how they tend to settle—or try to settle, or at least temporarily forget—unsettled matters and grudges of various kinds prior to (or during) Ramadan. Even deceased relatives are included in this Ramadanic heightened socialization, and Javanese Muslims are determined to have their families characterized by harmony during the fasting month. When it comes to the unity and harmony of the Muslim community, things get slightly more complicated as inter-Islamic differences color the *umat* during Ramadan. We may once again recall the questions of the number of *traweh* prayer cycles to be performed, the commencement and conclusion of Ramadan, the practice of *nyekar*, and so forth. Seeing such differences, some scholars have dramatized the Javanese Islamic landscape and described it in terms of antagonism between modernists and traditionalists (or, even worse, between animists-cum-Hindu-Buddhists and Muslims). Though disagreements over these and other issues are easy to find in contemporary Java, it is nevertheless my impression that such issues of discord are outnumbered by issues of unity. Javanese Muslims, I argue, see in the first place that their fellows fast and perform the supererogatory prayers during Ramadan, and only in the second place do they pay attention to on which day their fellow Muslims commence their fasting and how many prayer cycles they perform. In other words, Ramadan does provide the Javanese *umat* with unity and harmony, despite differences of various kinds that may temporarily disrupt it.

In line with this, we may say that Ramadan also has the function of reducing conflicts and tensions in Javanese society. Consider for example the *ruwahan*, which explicitly (and partly) has as its aim to reduce tensions in the neighborhood and to secure that it is colored by *slamet*, or tranquility and peacefulness. Tensions and latent conflicts between family members are also reduced during Ramadan by way of *silaturahmi* of some kind.

More interesting, perhaps, is that Ramadan in Java also seems to function as a witness to the happy marriage between Islam and Javanese culture. We can in the performance of Javanese Ramadan see that both normative Islamic rituals and ideals and Javanese interpretations of them exist side by side during the fasting month. Moreover, certain normative rituals are per-

formed in a specific Javanese manner, and we may hence speak of a 'Javanese Ramadan' (and even a 'Javanese Islam') that is comparable to other Ramadans/Islams elsewhere. Occasionally, the fact that Ramadan both expresses normative Islamic ideals and Javanese (pre-Islamic) culture can lead to contradictions. We may ponder, for example, upon the normative idea that the *umat* should be characterized by an outspoken egalitarianism during Ramadan (thus strengthening the idea of a *communitas*), and the actual practices of greetings on the day of *Lebaran*. These latter are in some instances far from expressing ideas of equality and egalitarianism; quite on the contrary, they function so as to legitimize the hierarchical (largely pre-Islamic) structure of Javanese society. Put differently, to prostrate before a local religious authority, kiss his hand, and ask for his forgiveness, can hardly be interpreted in the light of social equality. However, such oppositions are only rarely reflected upon by ordinary Muslims in Java, and do not pose any challenges to the marriage between Islam and Javanese culture. Instead, Javanese Muslims are often proud to declare that their performance of Ramadan and its rituals has a specific Javanese flavor. To most Javanese, that flavor is sweet.

Finally, another 'function' of Ramadan is that it constitutes a yearly reminder to people that they are Muslims. This has been proposed to me by Javanese friends, who have expressed the idea that they tend to become relatively lax in their religious performances at the time Ramadan is about to begin. As the fast commences, however, they are reminded in various ways of their Islamic duties (and additional obligatory practices), and they experience this as a relieving return to a more correct Muslim way of life. It is this *momentum* many Muslim activists strive to make use of in their quest of Ramadanizing the entire year.

RAMADAN, FAITH, AND PRACTICE

Islam is occasionally portrayed as a religion in which it is not 'orthodoxy' but rather 'orthopraxy' that stands in focus. I am inclined to agree with this standpoint, and with Tord Olsson in that he argues that this preoccupation with the practical sides of religion is not peculiar to Islam (see chapter one and four above).

Pious and devout Muslims are thus very concerned with what they do, and they try to mold their lives on the model set by the *uswah ḥasanah* (A., excellent example), Muhammad. They thus pray as the prophet did, and they fast as he did. Even the execution of the first of the Islamic pillars—that of the profession of *faith*—is more likely to be concerned with questions of correct pronunciation of the Arabic and the ritual cleanness of the one who is pronouncing it, than with issues pertaining to her beliefs and intentions. Glancing at the other four pillars—the prayer, the fast, the charity, and the pilgrimage—we quickly note that the correct performance of them is even more emphasized. Muhammad is quoted as having said: "Pray as you see me

pray" (*ṣallū kamā raytumūnī uṣallī*), and all the other Islamic rituals are likewise molded upon the example set by him. There are thus sound reasons for depicting Islam as a religion more concerned with orthopraxy than with orthodoxy. This does not mean, however, that Islam is without normative articles of faith (it is not) or that Muslims do not ponder upon questions of belief and faith (they do). It just draws attention to the fact that practice is more important than theory when it comes to how Islam is lived: emphasis is thus on *how, when,* and *where* one performs a ritual, and only secondarily on *why* one does it.

To strengthen the argument further, we may consider briefly the ritual of Koranic recitation. During no other month do Javanese Muslims hear Koranic recitation as frequently as during Ramadan. Living close to a mosque (which virtually all urban, and many rural, Javanese do), people are likely to wake up some time prior to the *sahur* meal to the sound of Koran recitation broadcast over the neighborhood during this month, and to fall asleep to the post-*traweh* recitation. In addition to this, many Javanese also recite the Koran (I. *ngaji*) individually or follow recitation courses during the fasting month. It should be noted, however, that very few Javanese Muslims recite the Koran in order to deepen their understanding of their religion. This is caused by the fact that the vast majority of the Javanese have no grammatical understanding of Arabic at all; their knowledge of this foreign language is circumscribed to a few important words and the ability to recite their Holy Writ. Their focus is consequently not on the linguistic or grammatical meaning of the Koran when they are reciting it, but rather on the correct way of doing it. A correct rendering of the Arabic Koran will, it is believed, render loads of *pahala*, or religious merit, to the reciter. As a result, classes of *tajwīd* (A., recitation rules) are more popular than classes of *tafsīr* (A., exegesis). Discussing Muslims in Mayotte, Michael Lambeck has observed that "it is [...] the act of *dzoru* (recitation of sacred texts) rather than the insight gained by means of or as a result of *dzoru* that is paramount."[18] The same could be said for Javanese practices of recitation.

In the case of Ramadan in Java, we have repeatedly seen that what is emphasized is the correct performance of a ritual rather than its underlying principles. Some Javanese Muslims even suggest that we should not pay so much attention to a ritual's possible boons or essence since such issues are beyond the scope of human reason. The underlying principles or inner essence of the *traweh* prayers, for example, are hence not of interest to Muslims in Java. What is of importance to them is the number of prayer cycles these prayers should consist of, and what formulae should be recited in-between them. The monographs on Ramadan discussed in chapter four above were to a large extent focused on the practical sides of Ramadanic fasting, and I hence suggested that we call them Ramadanic handbooks. In them we receive detailed instructions on how Ramadan should be performed, whereas

[18] Lambeck 1990: 27.

questions of a more philosophical nature are dealt with in a hurry. This, I believe, is probably partly motivated by the fact that everybody knows that it is practical Ramadanic advice that is sought after when one buys a book on Ramadan. Javanese Muslims are more prone to ask themselves: "How are the *traweh* prayers performed?" than "Why are the *traweh* prayers performed?" or "What are the *traweh* prayers underlying principles?"

RAMADAN AND THE ISLAMIC RESURGENCE

Lacking historical material concerning the performance of Ramadan in Java, we cannot surely determine the Javanese Muslim attitude to the fast during other periods than the contemporaneous. We should here, however, recall that I, in chapter two, argued that the history of Javanese Islam generally has been one of slow—but increasingly fast—and steady movement towards an Islamic 'orthodoxy'. In that same chapter I also drew attention to the effects of the worldwide Islamic resurgence in Java, and noted various ways in which personal piety has been expressed and emphasized lately by Javanese Muslims. I hence discussed the importance of the Islamic prayer in contemporary Java, the use of Islamic dress, the reading of Islamic literature, the use of the Islamic greeting, and the huge numbers of Indonesian going on the pilgrimage to Mecca each year. In addition, I also noted some expressions of the Islamic resurgence on the political level in Indonesia, and took as my starting point the rapprochement between former President Soeharto and various Muslim groups in the 1980s. In connection with this, I also mentioned the (new) existence of Islamic banks and Islamic assurance companies in Indonesia.

Taking this general Islamic resurgence into consideration, we may probably conclude that the Ramadanic fast is more meticulously observed in Java today than ever before. Should I dare to foresee the future, I would say that I see no signs of this development either slowing down or turning around; rather, I predict that it will escalate further, and that it will do so in its own specific Javanese/Indonesian way. We should have this in mind when we read and criticize previous accounts of Javanese Islam, i.e., that there are no guarantees that Islam had such a prominent role in Java at the time of this earlier research. Thus, though for example Geertz's account of Javanese Islam (resulting from fieldwork in the 1950s) may be criticized on several points, we should not forget that he studied a Java that was quite different from the Java we find today.

In regard to the relationship between the observance of Ramadan and its rituals on the one hand, and the Islamic resurgence on the other, we should finally note that it is characterized by a two-way influence. Put differently, whereas the Islamic resurgence assures that the month long fast is thoroughly observed in Java, there could be no Islamic resurgence to talk about in the first place had this not been the case.

RAMADAN AND ISLAMIC RITUALS

In the introduction to this work, I argued that Islamic rituals have been surprisingly meagerly studied, and that non-Muslim theories of Islamic rituals habitually have been detached from the lives, experiences, and explanations of Muslims themselves. Hence, I proposed 'four basics' as an aid for our understanding of these Islamic rituals. I argued thus that Islamic rituals (1) follow the example set by the prophet Muhammad; (2) are believed to generate religious merit; (3) are thought to be able of reducing the common feeling of debt many Muslims host towards God; and (4) express certain Islamic ideas and ideals (primarily that of the Oneness of God, *tawḥīd*).

Ramadanic fasting in Java fulfills all these four basics in that it is molded upon the example set by the prophet; believed to generate *pahala* in large quantities; supposed to lessen the Muslim debt towards God; and express the unity of God (in that the Koranic aim of fasting is to attain *takwa*). The same can be said about many Ramadanic sub-rituals (such as Koran recitation and the performance of the *traweh* prayers (despite inter-Islamic differences)), although not all (such as *ruwahan*, *mudik, sungkeman*). In the cases Ramadanic rituals do not express all of the proposed basics, we see that it is often the first basic that is missing. We know that neither the *ruwahan* nor the practices of *mudik* or *sungkeman* have any clear references in the Koran or the *ḥadīth* literature. Despite this, they are often thought to contain the other proposed basics (either directly or indirectly), and thus be 'Islamic' in one sense or another. They are not normative in the sense we have used the term in this work, and thus more open to criticism and debates than other Islamic rituals. Indeed, some Muslims are prone to argue that if a ritual is missing the first basic, then the others must by definition be missing too.

Islamic rituals and Muslims' approaches to them are thus multifaceted, but I am still of the conviction that the four proposed basics constitute a reasonable and initial criteria for understanding Islamic rituals.

THE END OF THE RAMADANIC ROAD

Here, our journey ends. We have allowed ourselves some sidetracks from the desirable and asked-for 'straight path' (A. *aṣ-ṣirāṭu l-mustaqīm*), but nevertheless feel that we have arrived in the vicinity of where we hoped to arrive. While the journey has provided us with much knowledge whose contours we could have sensed in advance, we have also met with more than a few surprises along the road. Time and again, we have, in addition, been reminded that the ultimate goal of a journey like the present is not the final destination, but rather the journeying itself. Therefore, no *grand finale* can or will be presented here.

That our journey ends here does not mean that the road ends too, or that no further ventures are possible. Quite on the contrary, I like to believe that our journey has paved the way for future excursions of a similar kind. Without discussing these proposed voyages in any detail here, I would like to provide some possible directions for them.

First and foremost, more studies of Ramadan are desperately needed. In Java, it would probably prove fruitful to study the month of fasting in a rural setting, or in some of the *wali* towns of the northern coast. Rural Muslims in Java have at times been depicted as 'less Islamic' or, at least, 'less orthodox' than their urban counterparts in Western scholarship. Some urban Javanese Muslims themselves, however, are unambiguous in their convictions that their rural countrymen live closer to a perceived ideal Islamic life than they do themselves. These contrasting ideas could thus hopefully be given some clarity by studying rural Ramadan in Java. Such a study would also let us see how Ramadan and its rituals in rural and urban settings differ on the same island, whereas we naturally also would find many similar ideas and practices in a rural context as we have found in this study. One can perhaps anticipate that religious authority still to a larger degree is in the hands of religious scholars in rural Java, whereas the availability and influence of what has been denoted as "written Islam/Ramadan" in this study still is limited.

To study Ramadan (and, by consequence, Islam) in one of the *wali* towns of the northern coast of Java would by necessity involve investigations into the commonplace idea that these towns are centers of 'orthodoxy' and a 'strict religiosity.' Without anticipating too much here, one could perhaps foresee that the role of Islamic scholars is larger there than in both Yogyakarta and Blora, at the same time, however, as the entire spectrum of the written Ramadan is ready available. Digging into Ramadan/Islam in a *wali* town could also include investigations of the strategies of local scholars and politicians for upholding the image of their town as a 'strict Islamic' one. Such strategies are probably extra visible before and during the month of fasting.

I am also sure that studies of Ramadan elsewhere in Indonesia (i.e., outside of Java) would prove very worthwhile. It would be interesting, for example, to study how Ramadan in Padang, West Sumatra, relates to its central Javanese equivalent, or how people from South Sulawesi celebrate the month long fast. In this connection, a study of the Ramadanic ideas and behaviors of Javanese migrants elsewhere in Indonesia would also be valuable. One might ask, for example, if and how specific Javanese Ramadanic practices are upheld in a non-Javanese cultural and geographical setting. Questions like these leads us in to questions on the religious behavior of minority groups. A study of much interest would be one that discusses how Indonesian

Muslims in predominately Christian East Indonesia celebrate Ramadan (and what the majority society has to say about that).

Needless to say, studies of Ramadan outside both Java and Indonesia would be very valuable too. One could make a study of how overseas Indonesians celebrate the month, or one could focus on entirely other groups. I have already mentioned the need for studies of French, Surinamese, and Pakistani Ramadan. Of course, studies of Palestinian, Danish, South African, and Indian Ramadanic practices and ideas would be just as welcome.

Not only Ramadan calls for our attention, however, as studies of other rituals (that do not belong to the Ramadanic ritual complex) are as surprisingly few as those centered on Ramadan are. I call for studies of ordinary Islamic rituals, as performed by ordinary Muslims, on a more general plane. This would include studies of Islamic prayers, Koran recitation, pilgrimage, sermon delivering, and so on, and I propose that such studies be arranged according to the perspectives that have been provided in this work. In other words, I believe it would prove rewarding to study such ordinary rituals in the light of normative, written, and lived Islam, and to discuss the relationship between these entities. Such studies can be conducted virtually in any cultural or geographical setting, but I would personally vote for a concentration on Southeast Asian and especially Indonesian contexts. This has to do with my personal interests, of course, but also with the fact that more Muslims live in Indonesia than in the Middle East.

Further, with the dissemination and fragmentation of religious authority that I have briefly mentioned in this work, we must start to take local Muslim scholarship and various forms of popular media seriously. Studying such media means that we get access to both normative and more non-normative written worlds, and in some cases it might be that they work as mediators or brokers between what has been denoted as normative and lived Islam in this thesis. Such material needs attention.

Finally, there is a burning call for studies of Islam as a religion, and not only as a political potential. I do not in any way disregard or disdain studies of political Islam, but in a time of ever-ceasing accusations against Islam as a religion with omnipresent violent and terrorist inclinations, the need for a counterbalance is obvious. This could preferably take the form of studies of everyday Islam among everyday Muslims, and, preferably again, among Muslims living in the so-called peripheral areas of the Islamic world. Such studies can—and will—provide alternative images of Islam in the contemporary world.

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والله اعلم

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SAMMANFATTNING PÅ SVENSKA

SUMMARY IN SWEDISH

I Indonesien står det utom alla rimliga tvivel att den månadslånga fastan under ramadan är islams mest betydande ritual. Att fasta under ramadan är i mångt och mycket detsamma som att bekänna sig till den muslimska religionen, medan det är en logisk omöjlighet att inte hålla fastan men ändå kalla sig en god muslim. De fem dagliga bönerna har en liknande funktion i dagens Indonesien (det vill säga att förse sina utövare med en muslimsk identitet), men det är vanligtvis ändå fastan som sätts i första (rituella) rummet. Forskning från andra muslimska områden visar på liknande omständigheter, även om iakttagandet av den månadslånga fastan i varje bestämd kulturell och historisk miljö hyser sina speciella kännetecken. Det är med andra ord ofrånkomligt att ramadan i Palestina, till exempel, inte är identisk med ramadan i Surinam, eller att ramadan i Malaysia skiljer sig från sin motsvarighet i Frankrike. Vi kan alltså prata om flera olika ”ramadaner,” och även inom en och samma statsstat kan vi förvänta oss att finna olika uppfattningar om hur fastan ska hållas och utövas. I den väldiga arkipelagen som Indonesien utgör behöver vi sålunda inte bli förvånade då vi finner åtskilliga, och stundvis motstridiga, åsikter om hur, varför och till och med när fastan bör observeras.

Av denna korta inledning torde det stå klart att den ramadanska fastan inte bara utgör islams kanske viktigaste ritual enligt muslimerna själva, utan att den även utgör ett frodigt område för akademisk forskning. Naturligtvis är det rimligt att anta att stora forskningsinsatser redan riktats mot sådana centrala ritualer som den rituella fastan under ramadan, och att detta gjorts i skilda muslimska miljöer. Men så är inte fallet. Istället blir man förvånad över hur lite akademisk uppmärksamhet den rituella fastan lyckats attrahera. I introduktionsböcker till islam avhandlas ämnet vanligtvis på några få rader, och vetenskapliga artiklar och monografier som fokuserar på ämnet är

tämligen lätträknade. Bevekelsegrunderna till denna flagranta akademiska negligering är inte helt lätta att förstå, men vi kan åtminstone peka på några bidragande orsaker till att ramadan och ramadanska ritualer nästan helt gått förbi västerländska forskares ansträngningar. För det första är det så att forskare som sysslat med islam vanligtvis valt att koncentrera sig på religionens (arabiska och persiska) texter, och på de civilisationer som sprungit upp där islam etablerat sig. Vardagligt religiöst liv har med andra ord hamnat i skymundan bakom större teologiska, (religions-)filosofiska, politiska, lingvistiska och historiska perspektiv. Detta förfaringssätt är i sin tur kopplat till idéer inom den västerländska religionsforskningen som hävdar (direkt eller indirekt) att religion i första hand handlar om tro, dogmer och ortodoxi, och bara i andra hand (om ens det!) om ritualer och ortopraxi (se Olsson 1999; 2000). En sådan uppfattning är starkt knuten till protestantismens synsätt, och inte applicerbar utan vidare på religioner som står utanför denna tradition. En annan orsak till att ramadan inte lyckats utöva den dragningskraft på västerländska forskare den förtjänar, är troligtvis att den är så synlig, uppenbar och påtaglig i muslimska samhällen att dessa forskare helt enkelt inte sett skogen för alla träden. I all sin vardaglighet har alltså den rituella fastan under ramadan och även andra muslimska alldagliga ritualer inte förmått dessa forskare att få upp ögonen för dem. Sen är det självklart också så att ritualstudier kan vara synnerligen (fysiskt) krävande och erfordra långa fältstudier.

När det gäller negligerandet av muslimska ritualer i Sydostasien kan vi utöka listan med bidragande orsaker något, då forskare som varit aktiva i Indonesien och övriga Sydostasien ofta varit av åsikten att den ”äkta” sydostasiatiska kulturen varit betydligt djupare än islam, och att islam bara kunnat betraktas som en inkräktande kulturkraft i området (Hefner 1997a). Detta synsätt har reviderats något under de senaste decennierna, men det är fortfarande inte ovanligt att höra sådana osannolika påståenden som att indonesiska muslimer inte är ”riktiga” muslimer. En sista orsak till att alldagliga muslimska ritualer bara funnit sin väg till ett fåtal akademiska verk, är knuten till den omständigheten att även om antropologer som varit verksamma i muslimska områden ofta fokuserat på ritualer i sina arbeten, har de vanligtvis letat efter ritualer som stått utanför (och helst i motsättning till) muslimsk ortopraxi. Det har alltså inte sällan fokuserat på vad som är ”icke-islam”.

I *Ramadan in Java: The Joy and Jihad of Ritual Fasting* står, som titeln antyder, ramadan och ramadanska ritualer på den indonesiska ön Java i fokus. Avhandlingen är baserad på tre års vistelse på Java, där material från olika fält insamlats för att senare behandlas. Det är först och främst de två centraljavanesiska städerna Yogyakarta och Blora som uppmärksammas, men även en hel del mer allmänindonesiska uppfattningar och praxis lämnas utrymme. För att kontextualisera avsnitten om de specifikt javanesiska och indonesiska ramadanska ritualerna och uppfattningarna, ges även de arabiska normativa texterna erforderligt svängrum, och det presenteras en introduktion till islam på Java, så som man kan uppfatta denna utifrån dess historia, aktörer och de forskarinsatser som riktats mot den. Det hävdas sålunda att

islams historia på Java kan beskrivas som en långsam men allt snabbare strävan efter ortopraxi (och ortodoxi), och att det ”islamiska uppvaknandet” som färgat och i vissa fall karaktäriserat den muslimska världen sedan slutet av 1970-talet, spelat en viktig roll i detta närmande av ortopraxin. Vidare beskrivs det muslimska landskapet i det kontemporära Indonesien som nästan helt dominerat av modernister och traditionalister, samt att det ligger en sufisk skugga över dessa båda grupper (dock främst traditionalisterna). Idéer om att radikala och liberala muslimer skulle spela avgörande och framträdande roller i dagens Indonesien, som viss forskning och framförallt journalistik hävdat på senare tid, refuseras bestämt. Både radikal och liberal islam ges oproportionerligt stort utrymme i både indonesisk och västerländsk massmedia, och det har därför antagits att detta utrymme reflekterar deras faktiska inflytande. Så är inte fallet. Snarare är deras utrymme tämligen begränsat, och både radikal och liberal islam är relativt okända begrepp utanför landets största städer. I små städer som Blora är dessa grupper skäligen marginella, även om både liberala och radikala åsikter (så klart) kan påträffas även där.

Metodologiskt hävdas det i avhandlingen dels att islam (och muslimska fenomen) kan och bör studeras utifrån tre vinklar, samt att muslimska ritualer alla har några grundläggande principer som de flesta muslimer kan godta, även om de uppfattar och utför dessa ritualer på olika vis. De tre vinklarna som föreslås är följande: den normativa, den skriftliga och den levda. Den första av dessa härrör till det som muslimerna själva anser deras religion föreskriver, och är sålunda starkt kopplad till koranen och den profetiska traditionen, som den bevarats i *hadith*-samlingar. Denna normativa aspekt av islam är också knuten till de muslimska lärde (*ulama*) och speciellt deras föregångares arbeten. Den levda aspekten av islam är just hur islam levs, uppfattas och utförs av samtida muslimer. Som man kan anta kan man inte sätta likhetstecken mellan normativ och levd islam, och med andra ord finns det en diskrepans mellan vad muslimer anser sig vara ålagda att göra och vad de faktiskt gör. (Detta är såklart på inget vis enbart utmärkande för muslimer; i själva verket kan man säga att det är regel snarare undantag att ett dylikt förhållande mellan normativ och levd religion kan iakttagas.) Levd islam innefattar alltså (delvis) normativ islam, men den bygger också vidare och inkorporerar element som står utanför islam (och kanske till och med i motsättning till denna). Med den ”skrivna islam” avses i denna avhandling alla de kontemporära och populära mediala uttryck som publiceras med en hastighet som saknar motstycke i den muslimska världen idag. Dessa uttryck innefattar såväl böcker och artiklar som predikokassetter, musik och såpoperor, och kan i vissa fall fungera som en slags kulturella medlare mellan den normativa och den levda aspekten av islam.

När det gäller de grundläggande principerna för muslimska ritualer, hävdas det att dessa är fyra till antalet, nämligen att de följer profeten Muhammads perfekta exempel; att de antas generera religiös merit (*pahala*); att de kan minska den känsla av skuld många muslimer känner mot Gud; samt

att de uttrycker vissa muslimska idéer och ideal. Dessa grundläggande principer kan förmodligen godtas av de flesta muslimer, men detta innebär inte att muslimska ritualer inte ständigt debatteras och är föremål för starka meningsskiljaktigheter. En sufier på den javanesiska landsbygden och en islamist (radikal muslim) i Jakarta kan troligtvis båda skriva under på ramadans grundläggande principer enligt detta mönster, men inte desto mindre lär de förstå och implementera dessa principer på något olika vis. Vi måste med andra ord inse att muslimska ritualer kan utföras på avvikande vis, trots att dess utövare kanske alla godtar ritualernas grundläggande principer.

I *Ramadan in Java* appliceras dessa båda metodologiska grepp på det javanesiska materialet, och det är sålunda såväl normativ som skriven och levd ramadan som står i fokus. Dessa ”delar” av ramadan beskrivs dels var för sig och dels i förhållande till varandra. Speciell vikt läggs vid det etnografiska beskrivandet av hur ramadan firas i Java, och det är främst ramadans många subritualer som ges utrymme i texten. Några av dessa ritualer diskuteras relativt uttömande, och läsaren ges möjlighet att förstå hur till exempel de populära *tarawih*-bönerna har kommit att utövas på olika vis av modernister och traditionalister i Indonesien, samt hur det kan komma sig att dessa båda grupper under somliga år påbörjar och avslutar den årliga fastan på olika dagar. Några specifika javanesiska ritualer, så som *slametan* (en rituell sammankomst där mat välsignas och distribueras) och *nyekar* (besök på gravplatserna), diskuteras också i avhandlingen, och det argumenteras på ett generellt plan att det finns gott om anledningar att prata om en specifik javanesisk ramadan, eller ett specifikt javanesiskt firande av denna helgade månad. Detta framgår också med viss tydlighet då den tidigare forskningen om ramadan i andra muslimska områden diskuteras, och då den javanska ramadan sätts i jämförelse med dessa.

Två återkommande tema i avhandlingen är de som vidhåller att det är en glädje att få fasta, samt att iakttagandet av den ramadanska fastan med rätta kan beskrivas som det ”stora jihad”. Det första av dessa tema går stick i stäv med gängse uppfattningar bland icke-muslimer om fastans vara och villkor, som hellre brukar beskrivas som en årligen återkommande plåga som det muslimska samfundet helt enkelt inte kan väja undan. Sådana uppfattningar får inget eller mycket litet stöd i Indonesien, där fastan varje år väntas på, och emottages varmt (med speciella ritualer) när den väl uppenbarat sig. Vidare beskriver många indonesiska muslimer en sorg när fastan är över, eftersom de inte kan vara säkra på att de får leva tills nästföljande ramadan, och eftersom de följaktligen ångrar att de inte utnyttjat detta års ramadan ännu bättre (och utfört ännu fler frivilliga ritualer, det vill säga). När ramadan beskrivs som det ”stora jihad” har man i åtanke den profetiska tradition i vilken Muhammad uppges ha sagt till sitt samfund efter ett krig att de nu återigen skulle fokusera på det stora jihad. Det ”lilla jihad” är per definition det fysiska kriget, medan dess stora motsvarighet är kampen mot ens egna världsliga begär. Undertiteln till detta arbete, *The Joy and Jihad of Ritual Fasting*, avfärdar sålunda två vanligt förekommande förutfattade meningar

hos icke-muslimer, nämligen att den årliga fastan inget annat är än en återkommande plåga, samt att ”jihad” i första hand syftar på den fysiska krigföringen och erövringen. Denna sista fråga lyfter också upp ett annat genomgående tema i avhandlingen, nämligen att islam måste kunna och få studeras som *religion* i denna vår tid då islam först och främst kommit att bli förknippad med en obskyr och opålitlig politisk potential.

RINGKASAN DALAM BAHASA INDONESIA

SUMMARY IN INDONESIAN

Di Indonesia tak dapat disangkal bahwasanya puasa selama bulan suci Ramadhan merupakan ritus terpenting dalam agama Islam. Berpuasa selama Ramadhan ini bisa dikatakan identik dengan menyatakan diri sebagai seorang Muslim atau Muslimah, dan merupakan kemustahilan logis untuk mengaku sebagai orang Islam tanpa menghiraukan bulan penuh berkah ini. Shalat lima waktu memiliki peranan yang mirip di Indonesia (yaitu memberikan sebuah identitas Islam kepada para orang yang menunaikannya), namun pada biasanya puasa malah lebih dipentingkan lagi. Penelitian dari berbagai daerah lainnya di dunia Islam menunjukkan bahwa keadaan ini tidak hanya berlaku untuk Indonesia, meskipun bisa dipastikan bahwa bulan puasa dalam suatu budaya atau pada suatu waktu historis tertentu memiliki ciri-ciri khas tersendiri. Dengan kata lain, kita tidak bisa menyamakan begitu saja Ramadhan di Palestina, misalnya, dengan Ramadhan di Surinam, dan kita juga harus sadar bahwa Ramadhan di Malaysia berbeda dengan Ramadhan di Perancis. Maka, terdapat banyak Ramadhan di dunia Islam, dan bisa juga diperkirakan bahwa di dalam suatu negara pun terdapat pendapat yang berbeda-beda mengenai bagaimana bulan puasa ini hendak ditunaikan. Dengan demikian, kita tidak perlu heran ketika menyadari bahwasanya berbagai kelompok di Nusantara memiliki pendapat yang berbeda dan terkadang saling bertolak belakang mengenai bagaimana, mengapa dan malah kapan bulan puasa ini harus ditunaikan.

Dari pengantar pendek ini dapat kita tarik kesimpulan bahwa Ramadhan ini tidak hanya merupakan ritus terpenting dalam agama Islam, tapi juga bahwa ritus ini merupakan lahan subur untuk penelitian ilmiah dan akademis. Tidak aneh jika kita mengira bahwa penelitian bermacam-macam telah diarahkan kepada masalah bulan puasa ini, dan bahwa penelitian ini

telah diselenggarakan di berbagai daerah di dunia Islam. Namun, tidak begitu. Sebaliknya, kami kaget waktu menyadari betapa sedikit penelitian yang pernah ditunjukkan kepada bulan penuh berkah ini. Di dalam buku-buku pengantar Islam, masalah puasa pada umumnya hanya dibahas dalam beberapa garis saja, dan artikel atau buku yang fokus utamanya diarahkan kepada bulan ini dapat dihitung dengan sungguh cepat. Alasan-alasan untuk pengabaian akademis ini tidak terlalu mudah untuk dipahami, akan tetapi kami dapat menunjukkan beberapa kenyataan yang telah ikut membantu supaya bulan Ramadhan ini hampir belum disentuh para penliti dari Barat. Pertama, ahli-ahli Islam di Barat pada umumnya memfokuskan perhatiannya pada teks-teks klasik (dalam bahasa Arab dan Iran), dan pada peradaban-peradaban yang muncul di mana-mana Islam dijadikan agama utama. Dengan kata lain, kehidupan keagamaan sehari-hari tidak menerima sebanyak perhatian seperti masalah-masalah teologis, filosofis, politis, linguistis dan historis. Kenyataan ini erat terkait dengan gagasan di dalam studi penelitian agama di Barat bahwasanya agama terutama berhubungan dengan keimanan, dogma dan ortodoksi, dan hanya setelah itu dengan ritus, peribadatan dan ortopraksi (lihat Olsson 1999; 2000). Pendapat demikian terikat secara kencang dengan pemikiran Protestan, dan tak dapat diaplikasikan begitu saja pada agama-agama lain. Sebuah alasan lain yang telah akibatkan Ramadhan tidak begitu dihiraukan peneliti-peneliti dari Barat, ialah bahwa ritus ini "terlalu kelihatan." Kata orang Swedia, orang tak dapat lihat hutan karena kebanyakan pohon. Dengan sifat kesehari-hariannya, puasa selama bulan Ramadhan tidak menimbulkan ketertarikan yang berarti dalam benak-benak peneliti dari luar. Dan tentu saja, penelitian terhadap ritus seperti Ramadhan ini seringkali membutuhkan banyak tenaga dan kerja lapangan berkelanjutan.

Berhubungan dengan pengabaian terhadap ritus-ritus Islam di Asia Tenggara, kita juga harus menyadari bahwa peneliti yang aktif di daerah ini seringkali beranggapan bahwa kebudayaan "asli" Asia Tenggara lebih "dalam" daripada Islam, dan bahwa Islam hanya merupakan kekuatan budaya yang secara terpaksa terdapat di Indonesia dan negara-negara lain di Asia Tenggara (Hefner 1997a). Pendapat-pendapat demikian telah diralat oleh penelitian mutakhir pada beberapa dasawarsa terakhir ini, namun masih terdengar pendapat aneh seperti "orang Islam di Indonesia bukan orang Islam sejati" dan sejenisnya. Alasan terakhir yang disebutkan di sini berhubungan dengan pengabaian terhadap ritus-ritus biasa di Indonesia, ialah bahwa meskipun sejumlah ahli antropologi telah mengadakan penelitian di Asia Tenggara, termasuk Indonesia, mereka pada umumnya mencari dan memperhatikan ritus-ritus yang berdiri di luar Islam normatif (dan mungkin malah bertolak belakang dengannya). Dengan kata lain, mereka cenderung memfokuskan perhatiannya pada sesuatu yang bisa disebut "bukan Islam."

Dalam karya *Ramadan in Java: The Joy and Jihad of Ritual Fasting*, bulan Ramadhan dengan ritus-ritusnya di Jawa merupakan fokus utama. Disertasi ini berdasarkan keberadaan penulis di Jawa selama tiga tahun, ketika materi-materi dikumpulkan untuk di kemudian hari disusun. Terutama

keadaan di kota Yogyakarta dan Blora, Jawa Tengah, yang diperhatikan, akan tetapi gagasan-gagasan dan praktek-praktek yang dapat ditemukan di seluruh Indonesia juga diberi ruangan. Supaya bab-bab yang secara eksplisit membahas ritus-ritus dan pendapat-pendapat Ramadhan di Jawa dan Indonesia lebih mudah dimengerti, teks-teks normatif dalam bahasa Arab juga diperhatikan, dan juga terdapat dalam karya ini sebuah pengantar kepada Islam di Jawa, sebagaimana ia dapat dipahami jika dilihat dari sisi sejarah, aktor, dan penelitian sebelumnya. Maka, dikatakan dalam karya ini bahwa sejarah Islam di Jawa bisa dideskripsikan sebagai sebuah gerakan pelan-pelan (namun semakin cepat) menuju Islam ortodoks (atau, lebih tepatnya, ortopraks). Dikatakan pula bahwa "kebangkitan Islam" yang memberi warna kepada dan terkadang mendominasi dunia Islam sejak akhir 1970-an, berperan secara penting dalam pendekatan ini. Lebih lanjut lagi, Islam di Jawa masa kini digambarkan sebagai didominasi oleh orang modernis (Muhammadiyah) dan tradisionalis (Nahdlatul Ulama), dan bahwasanya terdapat sebuah "kerudung Sufi" di atas ini segalanya (terutama atas para orang tradisionalis). Gagasan-gagasan yang menyatakan bahwa Islam radikal dan Islam liberal memiliki peranan sangat penting dan sangat berpengaruh di Indonesia kontemporer, seperti seringkali dinyatakan oleh berbagai peneliti dan wartawan akhir-akhir ini, ditolak dengan tegas. Baik Islam radikal maupun Islam liberal diberi ruangan di media masa yang tidak mencerminkan pengaruhnya, dan merupakan kekeliruan untuk berfikir bahwa pengaruh mereka sebesar suara-suara mereka di media masa. Tidaklah begitu. Sebaliknya, ruang gerak mereka sepertinya cukup terbatasi, dan di luar kota-kota besar, fenomena Islam radikal dan Islam liberal jarang diperhatikan secara serius. Di dalam kota kecil seperti Blora, kelompok seperti itu cukup dimarginalisir di dalam masyarkat, meski di sana pun (tentunya) gagasan radikal maupun liberal dapat ditemukan.

Secara metodologis dinyatakan di dialam karya ini bahwa Islam (dan fenomena Islam) dapat dan seharusnya dipelajari dari tiga sudut, dan bahwa ritus-ritus Islam memiliki beberapa dasar atau garis besar yang dapat disetujui semua orang Islam (meski mereka mungkin saja menunaikan ritus-ritus tersebut secara berbeda-beda). Ketiga sudut yang disebut di atas ialah sudut normatif, sudut media kontemporer, dan sudut nyata. Yang pertama berhubungan dengan apa saja yang orang-orang Islam sendiri yakini agama mereka mengharuskan. Dengan demikian, sudut ini erat terkait dengan al-Qur'an dan kumpulan hadits. Sudut normatif ini juga terkait dengan pendapat para ulama dan karya-karya fikih klasik. Sudut nyata memang Islam nyata, yaitu bagaimana Islam dipahami dan diselenggarakan oleh umat Islam. Seperti dapat dikira, Islam normatif dan Islam nyata ini tidak sepenuhnya identik, tapi terdapat jurang di ataranya. (Ini bukan ciri khas Islam saja, tapi dapat dikatakan merupakan ciri khas umum agama-agama.) Islam nyata termasuk (bagian dari) Islam normatif, tapi juga menapung berbagai elemen yang berdiri di luar Islam sendiri. Dengan sudut media kontemporer dimasksudkan segala bentuk media populer yang dengan begitu cepat

dikeluarkan di dunia Islam masa kini. Bentuk ini termasuk buku, artikel, kaset khutbah, musik, sinetron, dan lain sebagainya, dan dapat dalam keadaan tertentu berfungsi sebagai perantara di antara Islam normatif dan Islam nyata.

Mengenai dasar atau garis besar ritus Islam, dinyatakan di dalam karya ini bahwa jumlah mereka ialah empat, yaitu bahwa (1) ritus Islam mengikuti contoh sempurna (*uswah hasanah*) Muhammad, (2) ritus Islam mengakibatkan terkumpulkannya pahala, (3) ritus Islam dapat mengurangi rasa berhutang seorang Islam pada Allah, dan (4) ritus Islam dengan sendirinya menyatakan beberapa gagasan Islam, terutama yang berhubungan dengan tauhid. Keempat garis besar ini berkemungkinan besar dapat diterima kebanyakan orang Islam (di Indonesia), tapi ini tidak berarti bahwa ritus-ritus Islam tidak didiskusikan dan dijadikan bahan percekcokan. Seorang Sufi di pedesaan Jawa dan seorang radikal di Jakarta mungkin dapat menerima keempat garis besar ini, namun mereka juga bakal memahami dan mengamalkan ritus-ritus ini secara berbeda-beda. Dengan kata lain, kita harus menyadari bahwa ritus-ritus Islam dapat ditunaikan dengan macam-macam cara, meskipun orang-orang yang menunaikannya semua menerima garis-garis besarnya.

Di dalam *Ramadan in Java*, kedua gagasan metodologis ini diaplikasikan pada materi dari Jawa, dan dengan demikian baik Ramadhan normativ dan Ramadhan nyata maupun Ramadhan menurut media kontemporer yang diperhatikan. Ketiga "bagian" ini dibahas secara terpisah, akan tetapi terdapat pula pembahasan mengenai bagaima mereka saling berhubungan. Fokus khusus diarahkan kepada bagaimana bulan puasa Ramadhan ditunaikan di Jawa (Ramadhan nyata), dan terutama ritus-ritus Ramadhan ini yang diperhatikan. Beberapa dari ritus ini dibahas dengan cukup panjang lebar, supaya sang pembaca dapat mengerti, misalnya, mengapa shalat tarawih ditunaikan secara berbeda oleh beberapa kelompok di Jawa, dan mengapa kelompok.-kelompok ini pada tahun-tahun tertentu mengawali dan mengakhiri Ramadhan secara tidak bersamaan. Beberapa ritus khas Jawa, seperti *slametan* dan *nyekar* juga dibahas di dalam karya ini, dan dikatakan secara umum bahwa terdapat banyak alasan untuk mencanangkan sebuah "Ramadhan Jawa" yang berbeda dengan Ramadhan-Ramadhan di daerah lain. Hal ini semakin nyata ketika penelitian-penelitian sebelumnya yang diarahkan kepada Ramadhan dibahas, dan ketika Ramadhan Jawa dibandingkan dengan mereka.

Dua tema yang timbul berulang kali dalam karya ini ialah bahwa berpuasa selama bulan Ramadhan merupakan kegembiraan tersendiri, dan bahwa puasa selama bulan ini merupakan jihad al-akbar. Tema pertama ini bertolak belakang dengan pendapat umum yang dipegang orang non-Islam, yaitu bahwa puasa selama sebulan penuh hanya merupakan kesengsaraan berkelanjutan yang tak dapat dihindari umat Islam. Pendapat serupa tidak didukung keadaan nyata di Indonesia, di mana bulan puasa ditunggu setiap tahun dan diterima (dengan ritus khusus) secara hangat ketika sudah sampai. Lebih lanjut lagi, banyak orang Islam di Indonesia menyatakan bersedih hati

ketika harus berpisah dengan Ramadhan, sebab mereka tidak yakin mereka dapat bertemu kembali dengannya. Ketika Ramadhan digambarkan sebagai jihad al-akbar, di lain pihak, penggambaran tersebut berdasarkan sebuah hadits Nabi yang mengatakanbahwa Muhammad berkata kepada para sahabatnya setelah pulang ke Madinah setelah peperangan, bahwasanya mereka sekarang harus kembali berfokus kepada jihad al-akbar lagi. Maka "jihad kecil" ialah peperangan, sedangkan jihad al-akbar ialah perjuangan melawan hawa nafsu diri sendiri. Maka, sub-judul karya ini, yaitu *The Joy and Jihad of Ritual Fasting*, menolak dua pra-anggapan yang biasa dipegang oleh orang-orang non-Islam, yakni bahwa puasa tahunan Ramadhan tidak lain selain kesengsaraan, dan bahwa jihad pertama-tama berhubungan dengan perjuangan melawan nafsu sendiri, dan hanya setelah itu dengan peperangan fisik. Masalah terakhir ini juga menyangkut sebuah tema lain di karya ini, yaitu yang mengatakan bahwa Islam harus bisa dan harus boleh dipelajari sebagai *agama* di masa kini ketika Islam telah direduksi ke sebuah potensi politis yang tidak dapat dipercaya, menurut khalayak umum.

GLOSSARY OF SELECTED FOREIGN TERMS

Words are primary to be sought after in this glossary in their Indonesian form, in connection with which possible other forms also are given (i.e., Arabic and/or Javanese). In the case these forms use another initial letter than the Indonesian, separate entries with adequate references are provided. Note finally that in the numerous cases where the Javanese coincides with the Indonesian, no special reference has been made to point this condition out.

A. Arabic
I. Indonesian
J. Javanese
M. Malay
S. Sanskrit

A.H. anno hijriah (the Muslim era which began in 622 C.E.)
'ālim (A.) *see* **ulama**
abangan nominal Javanese Muslims; expression popularized by Geertz (1960)
adzan, adhan, azan (A. *adhān*) the call to prayer from the mosque
agama (from S.) religion
aḥādīth (A.) *see* **hadits**
ajzā' (A.) *see* **juz**
akhirat (A. *ākhirah*), the afterlife
Al Baqarah second verse of the Koran
Alfatekah (J.) see **Al Fatihah**
Al Fatihah (A. *al-fātiḥah*) first verse of the Koran
alhamdulillah (A. *al-ḥamdu lillāh*) all praise be to God
Allahu akbar (A. *Allāhu akbar*) God is greater
Al Qur'an (A. *al-Qurʾān*) the Koran
al Rayyan (A. *al-Rayyān*) the special gate in Paradise reserved for people who held the fast during Ramadan
amal (A. *ʿamal*) deed

amal sholeh (A. *ᶜamal ṣalāḥ*) pious deed
apem (J.) rice flour cakes (inevitable in the **ruwahan**)
arak-arakan (J.) processions held during **Ruwah** to welcome **Ramadan**
arkān al-islām (A.) *see* **rukun Islam**
ashar (A. *ᶜaṣr*) the afternoon (obligatory) prayer
assalamu'alaikum (A. *al-salāmu ᶜalaykum*) the Muslim greeting (May God's peace be upon you)
asyura (A. *ᶜāshūrāᵓ*) a day for fasting in the month of **Muharram**
ayat (A. *āyah,* pl. *ayāt*) a verse in the Koran
barakah (A. *barakah*) blessings
batil (A. *bāṭil*) invalid; worthless
batin (A. *bāṭin*) inner; internal (in contrast to **lahir**)
bedug (J.) drum at (traditionalist) mosques or prayer houses used to summon people to prayer
berkat (J.) see **barakah**
bi'dah (A. *bidᶜah*) innovation
buka to break the fast
buka puasa to break the fast
Bukhari (A. *Bukhārī*) an acknowledged collector of **hadits**
da'i (A. *ḍāᶜin*) one who invites to Islam; 'preacher'
daif, dlaif (A. *ḍaᶜīf*) weak (generally concerning **hadits**)
dakwah (A. *daᶜwah*) call (to religion)
Departemen Agama the Indonesian Departement for Religious Affairs
donga (J., A. *duᶜāᵓ*) supplication
doa (A. *duᶜāᵓ*) supplication
dukun (J.) traditional healer, 'magician', soothsayer
fajar (A. *fajr*) dawn
fardu (A. *farḍ*) obligatory
fidyah (A. *fidyah*) a special ransom to be paid by Muslims unable to fast
fikih (A. *fiqh*) Islamic jurisprudence
fitrah (A. *fiṭrah*) pure
gamelan (J.) classical Javanese music; the instruments on which such music is per formed
gengsi prestige
gorengan fried foodstuff served in connection with the breaking of the fast (and at other occasions)
hablum minallah (A. *ḥablu mina llāh*) the relation with God
hablum minanas (A. *ḥablu mina n-nās*) the relation with one's fellow humans
hadits (A. *ḥadīth*) tradition of the prophet
hadits qudsi (A. *ḥadīth qudsī*) sacred tradition
hajj (A. *ḥajj*) the pilgrimage to Mecka
halal (A. *ḥalāl*) lawful
halalbihalal post-Ramadanic get-togethers
haram (A. *ḥarām*) unlawful
hasan (A. *ḥasan*) good (generally concerning **hadits**)
hilal (A. *hilāl*) the new crescent moon
hisab (A. ḥisāb) calculating the apperance of the new crescent moon
ibadah (A. *ᶜibādah*, pl. *'ibādāt*) acts of devotion, pious practices

ICMI (Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim se-Indonesia) The Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals
Idul Adha (A. *ʿidu l-aḍḥā*) feast of sacrifice (held in connection with the annual pil grimage)
Idul Fitri (A. *ʿīdu l-fiṭr*) the feast concluding the fast of Ramadan
ijmak (A. *ijmāʾ*) consensus (legal term)
ijtihad (A. *ijtiḥād*) fresh interpretation through exertion
ikhlas (A. *ikhlāṣ*) sincerity
iktikaf (A. iʿtikāf) seclusion in a mosque (primarily during the last ten days of Ramadan)
imam (A. *imām*) prayer leader
imsak (A. *imsāk*) the time for concluding the nocturnal meal in Ramadan (some fifteen minutes before dawn prayer)
infak (A. *infāq*) disbursements
iqomah (A. *iqāmah*) the second call to prayer which announces that the prayers are beginning
islah (A. *iṣlāḥ*) revival
isya (A. *ʿishāʾ*) the nightly (obligatory) prayers
janabah (A. *janābah*) state of ritual impurity
jihad (A. *jihād*) struggle
jihad akbar (A. *al-jihādu l-akbar*) the larger struggle (i.e., the one against one's own desires)
jilbab (A. *ḥijāb*) veil
jimat (A. *ʿazīmah*) amulet
juz (A. *juzʾ*, pl. *ajzāʾ*) part of the Koran (the Book is divided into 30 *juz*)
juz 'amma (A. *juzʾ ʿamma*) the last **juz** of the Koran
kaffarah (A. *kaffārah*) atonement, expiation
kafir (A. *kāfir*) unbeliever
kalamullah (A. *kalāmu llāh*) theology
kampung village; small part in a town
ketupat (J.) a kind of rice cake boiled in a box of plaited coconut leaves that is immensely popular during **Lebaran**
khatam Al Qur'an (A. *khatamu l-qurʾān*) the recital of the entire Koran
khatib (A. *khaṭīb*, pl. *khuṭabāʾ*) Muslim 'preacher'
khurafat (A. *khurāfah*) superstition
khusyuk (A. *khushūʿ*) in full devotion
khutbah (A. *khuṭbah*) sermon
khutbah jum'at (A. *khuṭbatu l-jumʿah*) Friday sermon
kiblat (A. *qiblah*) direction of prayer
kolak sweet drink (made of coconut milk, bananas, sweet potatoes, and Javanese sugar) that is served at the time of breaking the fast
KUA (Kantor Urusan Agama) office for religious affairs
kula nuwun (J) 'excuse me'; phrase stated when approaching a house
kultum (kuliah tujuh menit) seven minute lectures presented in the mosque during Ramadan (and else)
kyai (J.) religious authority; religious teacher
lahir (A. *ẓāhir*) outer; external
lailatul qadar (A. *laylatu l-qadr*) the Night of Power
Lebaran (J.) the feast concluding the month long fast of Ramadan

Lebaran Sawal (J.) the feast concuding the six additional days of fasting immediately after Ramadan in the month of **Sawal** (celebrated in Rembang and elsewhere)
luhur (A. *ẓuhr*) the mid-day (obligatory) prayers
maghrib (A. *maghrib*) the dusk (obligatory) prayers
makhruh (A. *makrūh*) reprehensible
maksiat immoralities of various kinds
mandub (A. *mandūb*) recommendable
masjid (A. *masjid*) mosque
mazhab (A. *madhhab*, pl. *madhāhib*) legal schools
min al 'aidin wal faizin (A. *min al-ᶜāᵓidin wa l-fāᵓizīn*) standard phrase to be stated during **Lebaran** when asking for forgiveness
modin (J. from A. *muᵓadhdhin*) religous official
muakkad (A. *muᵓakkad*) confirmed; certain
muamalat (A. *al-muᶜāmalāt*) social interaction
muazzin (A. *muᵓadhdhin*) muezzin; the one who calls to prayer from the mosque
mudik undertaking a journey to one's parental home or area in conncection with **Lebaran**
Muhammadiyah the largest Muslim modernist organization in Indonesia
Muharram (A. *Muḥarram*) the first month of the Islamic year
MUI (Majelis Ulama Indonesia) the Council for Indonesian Islamic Scholars
mukena prayer dress used by women during the **sholat**
musafir (A. *musāfir*, pl. *musāfirūn*) traveler that can be legally extempted from fasting during Ramadan
musholla (A. *muṣallan*) small prayer house
Muslim an acknowledged collector of **hadits**; Muslim
nabi (A. *nabī*) prophet
nafsu (A. *nafs*) desire; the lower self
Nahdlatul Ulama (A. *nahḍātu l-ᶜulamāᵓ*) the largest traditionalist organization in Indonesia ('The Renaissance of the Religious Scholars')
nahdliyin member of **Nahdlatul Ulama**
nasyid (A. *nashīd*) Islamic music
ngaji (J.) to recite the Koran
niat (A. *nīyah*) intent
Nuzulul Qur'an (A. *nuzūlu l-Qurᵓān*) the 'coming down' (to the Earth) of the Koran
nyekar (J.) the visiting of graves
padusan (J., A. *ghusl*) the ritual major ablution prior to the month of Ramadan
pahala (A. *falāḥ*) (religious) merit; divine reward
pangestu (J.) blessing
pasa (J.) to fast; fasting
pasa sunat (J.) supererogatory fasting; non-obligatory fasting
Pasa (J.) the month of fasting; Ramadan
peci a fez-like cap widely used in Indonesia (as a Muslim symbol)
pepundhen (J.) sacred grave
peringatan (I.) commemoration
pesantren (J.) a traditional Islamic boarding school
pondok pesantren *see* **pesantren**
priyayi (J.) a Javanese aristocrat
puasa to fast; fasting; the fast
qada (A. *qaḍāᵓ*) redemption, payment
raka'at (A. *rakᶜah*, pl. *rakaᶜāt*) prayer cycles

Ramadhan (A. *Ramaḍān*) the ninth month of the Islamic year; the month of fasting
rasul (A. *rasūl*) prophet
rasulullah (A. *rasūlu llāh*) the Prophet of God, i.e. Muhammad
rukun (J.) harmony
rukun Islam (A. *ruknu l-islām*, pl. *arkānu l-islām*) the five pillars of Islam
rukyat (A. *ruʾyah*) physical sighting (of the moon)
rukyatul hilal (A. *ruʾyatu l-hilāl*) physical sighting of the new crescent moon
Ruwah (J.) the eighth month of the Javanese calender; the month prior to Ramadan
ruwahan (J.) a special **slametan** held in the month of **Ruwah**
sabar (A. *ṣabr*) patience
sahih (A. *ṣaḥīḥ*) sound (generally about **hadits**)
sahur (A. *saḥūr*) the nocturnal meal during Ramadan; eating the nocturnal meal during Ramadan
sajadah (A. *sajjādah*) prayer rug
sakim (A. *sakīm*) infirm (generally about **hadits**)
salam (A. *salām*) short expression for the Islamic greeting **assalamu'alaikum**
salam tempel (J.) the distribution of fresh banknotes to children during **Lebaran**
salawat (A. *ṣalawāt*) praise of Muhammad
santri (J.) pious Javanese Muslim; student at a **pesantren**
sarung sarong; dress used by Indonesian Muslim males
Sawal (J.) *see* **Syawal**
sawalan (J.) *see* **syawalan**
shaum (A. *ṣawm*) the fast; to perform the fast
sedekah (A. *ṣadaqah*) charity
selapan (J.) a 35-day cycle which is a result of a mix between the Islamic and Javanese calendars
shaykh (A.) *see* **kyai**
sholat (A. *ṣalāh*) ritual prayer; to perform ritual prayer
sholat id (A. *aṣ-ṣalātu l-ʿīd*) the ritual prayer performed on the morning of **Idul Fitri**
sholat jum'at (A. *aṣ-ṣalātu l-jumʿah*) the Friday prayer
sholat tarawih (A. *aṣ-ṣalātu t-tarāwīḥ*) the supererogatory nightly prayers during Ramadan
sholeh (A. *ṣalāḥ*) pious
silaturahmi, silaturrahmi, silaturahim, silaturrahim (A. *ṣilah* + *raḥīm*) the habit of visiting each other asking for forgiveness at the end of Ramadan; bonds of friendship; guarding over one's bonds of friendship
siyam (A. *ṣiyām*) the fast; to perform the fast
slamet (J.) a state of tranquility
slametan (J.) a ritual gathering for the neighborhood men in which prayers are recited and blessed food distributed
subhanallah (A. *subḥāna llāh*) glory be to God
subuh (A. *ṣubḥ*) the dawn (obligatory) prayers
sufisme (A. *taṣawwuf*) Sufism
sugeng riyadi (J.) happy holidays
sungkeman (J.) the practice of kneeling (or prostrating) while asking for forgiveness during **Lebaran**
sunnah, sunat (A. *sunnah*) the 'way' of the prophet
surat (A. *sūrah*, pl. *suwar*) Koranic chapter
suwar (A.) *see* **surat**

Syaban (A. *Shaᶜbān*) the eighth month of the Islamic lunar year; the month preceding Ramadan
syahadat (A. *shahādah*) the Islamic testimony of faith
syahid (A. *shahīd*) martyr
syariat (A. sharīᶜah) Islamic law; exoteric Islam
Syawal (A. *shawwal*) the tenth month of the Islamic year; the month following Ramadan
syawalan post-Ramadanic get-togethers
syirk (A. *shirk*) the sin of associating something or someone with God
tadarus (al Qur'an) to recite the Koran
tafsir (A. *tafsīr*) Koranic exegesis
tajdid (A. *tajdīd*) reform
takbir (A. *takbīr*) the expression **Allahu akbar**
takbiran the tradition of reciting a short set formulae during the night preceeding **Lebaran** that extols God
taklid (A. *taqlīd*) the reliance on the decisions and precedents set in the past; 'blind imitation'
takwa (A. *taqwā*) the fear of God; God-consciousness
tarawih (A. *tarāwīḥ*) supererogatory nightly prayers performed during Ramadan
tarekat (A. *ṭarīqah*, pl. *ṭuruq*) Sufi Order
tasawuf (A. *taṣawwuf*) Islamic mysticism; Sufism
tasbih (A. *misabaḥah*) rosary used in various **zikir** practices
tauhid (A. *tawḥīd*) the Unity of God
THR (Tunjangan Hari Raya) holiday alimony to be paid to employees before **Lebaran**
tilawatul Qur'an (A. *tilāwatu l-qurᵓān*) to recite the Koran
traweh (J., I. *tarawih*, A. *tarāwīḥ*) supererogatory nightly prayers performed during Ramadan
ujub (J.) greeting and intent stated at the **slametan**
ulama (A. *ᶜulamāᵓ*, pl. of *ᶜalīm*) learned Muslims
umat (A. *ᶜummah*) the Muslim community
umra (A. *ᶜumrah*) the lesser pilgrimage (to Mecca)
ustadz (A. *ustādh*) Islamic teacher
wajib (A. *wājib*) obligatory
wali Allah (A. *walīu llāh*) saint; 'God's friend'
wali Sanga (J.) the 'Nine Saints' who alledgedly spread Islam in Java
wayang (J.) shadow play performed with leather puppets
wirid (A. *wird*) the repetition of various formulaes in Arabic after performing **sholat**
wudlu (A. *wuḍūᵓ*) prescribed ritual ablution (i.e. before **sholat** and the like)
zakat (A. *zakāh*) a religious tax, tithe
zakat fitrah (A. *zakātu l-fiṭrah*) *see* **zakatulfitri**
zakatulfitri (A. *zakātu l-fiṭri*) a special religious tax to be paid before the end of Ramadan
ziarah (A. *ziyārah*) the practice of visiting tombs and graves
zikir (A. *dhikr*) 'recollection' of various formulae

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EOI	*Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1913-1936 (1993)
EOI2	*Encyclopaedia of Islam*, second edition. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1960-
EOR	*Encyclopaedia of Religion*, Mircea Eliade (ed. in chief). New York: MacMillan Publishing Company. 1987.
ḤA	*Ḥadīth Abū Dāʾūd*, prophetic tradition from the collection of Abū Dāʾūd. ḤA 10,1983 refers thus to the tradition found in Abū Dāʾūd, book 10, number 1983.
ḤB	*Ḥadīth Bukhārī*, prophetic tradition from the collection of Bukhārī. ḤB 1,2,7 refers thus to the tradition found in Bukhārī, volume 1, book 2, number 7.
ḤM	*Ḥadīth Muslim*, prophetic tradition from the collection of Muslim. ḤM 6,2566 refers thus to the tradition found in Muslim, book 6, number 2566.
QS	*Qurʿānic sūrah*, Koranic chapter. QS 2:183 refers thus to the second Koranic chapter (*sūratu l-baqarah*), verse 183.

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